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THE CONCEPT OF GOD

IN ISAIAH 40-55

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GENERAL FACULTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE ON BACHELOR OF DIVINITY DEGREES

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

BACHELOR OF DIVINITY

by

RAY EMERSON LEPPARD, B.Sc., M.Sc.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

APRIL, 1960





UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

ST. STEPHEN'S THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

We, the undersigned, hereby certify that we have read and recommend to the General Faculty Council for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN ISAIAH 40-55, submitted by Ray Emerson Leppard, B.Sc., M.Sc., in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity.





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IN ISAIAH 40-55

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St. Stephen's College

University of Alberta

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### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is a pleasure to gratefully acknowledge the invaluable assistance given by Professor G.L. Vogan throughout the preparation of this thesis, and in all related Old Testament studies. Thanks are also due the Faculty of St. Stephen's College for helpful suggestions and encouragement.





DEDICATION

To my family, whose ἰδῆ

made this work possible



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## PREFACE

"The most profound and exciting quest of the ages is the search for the ultimate meaning of the universe."<sup>1</sup> And not infrequently is the vocabulary of religion involved in the articulation of this inquiry - particularly the word "God". Thus, the content and value of this idea in the Old Testament is of great importance, since this literature, along with the New Testament, contains the major portion of the Western world's religious vocabulary.

In the Old Testament itself, the single concept of paramount importance is God. Although descriptive terms may vary with the preference, experience, historical and cultural setting of the various authors, there is still a "peculiar quality of the 'revelation'"<sup>2</sup> running through the Old Testament.

Goethe employs the metaphor of "the roaring loom of time"<sup>3</sup> on which is woven a garment to make God visible. In the following thesis, an attempt will be made to learn as much as we can of the shape and texture of that garment, as it was woven by the hands and mind of "the evangelist of the Old Testament",<sup>4</sup> the author of chapters 40 to 55 of the book of Isaiah. Here such lofty themes as the imminent coming of God (chapters 40-48) and the redemption of Israel and all the nations (chapters 49-55) receive the skilled treatment of a master-poet, a

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1. O.J. Baab: The Theology of the Old Testament; p. 23.

2. H.W. Robinson: Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament; p. 63.

3. Ibid., Citing Goethe, in Faust, Erster Theil, 11508-9.

4. J.A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 9.



profound thinker, and an inspired prophet, who is equally at home whether describing the matchless power or the tender compassion of God, His uniqueness or His nearness. "Here Hebrew prophecy reaches its highest peak and makes its sublimest disclosures of the Eternal."<sup>1</sup>

The textual sources used to assist in this investigation are,

(a) The King James Version, with Introduction and Critical Notes by Julius A. Bewer, in The Book of Isaiah, Volume II, Harper and Brothers, 1950.

(b) The Masoretic text (that of Ben Asher, edited by P. Kahle) presented in R. Kittle's Biblica Hebraica, Leipzig, 1906; seventh edition, edited by A. Alt and O. Eissfeldt, Stuttgart, 1929-1951.

(c) An English translation of Isaiah 40-55 by P.A.H. de Boer, Leiden, Oegstgeest, 1956, as published in Second-Isaiah's Message, same author, E.J. Brill, Leiden, Netherlands.

(d) An English translation, Deutero Isaiah, by R. Levy, Oxford University Press, London, 1925.

Translations of words or phrases from the Masoretic text into English were accomplished with the aid of A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, edited by Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1907.

The chronology followed is basically that of W.F. Albright.<sup>2</sup>

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1. S. Schilling: Isaiah Speaks; p. 85.

2. W.F. Albright: The Biblical Period; p. 66.





HEBREW ALPHABET AND ENGLISH transliteration

א - ' (aleph)	ב - l (beth)
ב - bh (bet)	מ - m (mem)
ג - b (gimel)	נ - n (nun)
ד - gh (dalet)	ס - s (samekh)
ה - g (he)	ע - ' (ayin)
ו - dh (vav)	פ - ph (pe)
ז - d (zayin)	צ - p (tsade)
ח - h (heth)	ק - q (kaph)
ט - w (tet)	ר - r (resh)
י - z (yod)	ש - s (shin)
כ - h (kaph)	ת - th (tav)
ל - t (lamed)	
מ - y (mem)	
נ - kh (nun)	
ס - k (samekh)	



## CHAPTER I.

### THE PROBLEM



## CHAPTER I

## THE PROBLEM

"Behold your God!"  
- Isaiah 40:9

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this thesis is to discover the concept of God contained in Isaiah, chapters 40 to 55, also known as Deutero, or Second Isaiah. By "concept" is meant "the results, rendered permanent by language, of a previous process of comparison."<sup>1</sup> Thus what is sought is the crystallized thinking of Second Isaiah with respect to the nature of God.

Importance of the Study

It is sincerely hoped that the proposed study of the Scriptures, over the above-mentioned area will, by the grace of God, reveal a measure of ultimate truth to those involved with this thesis.

That there is something relevant within chapters 40 to 55 of Isaiah, is intimated by the following statement:

"The natural evolution of ideas does much to deepen and enlarge men's thought of God; but there come moments when to such development there is needed the self-revelation of God Himself (we may not know how or by what means) and without which development alone merely disperses itself and becomes thin air, or else degeneration supervenes, of which the history of religion has offered many illustrations. Here was one of the men to whom God vouchsafed to

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1. Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, Vol. 1; p. 360, citing Sir W. Hamilton.





reveal Himself in a very special way, and there are not many to whom such revelation has been accorded, but when there is response, as in the case of Deutero-Isaiah, they become landmarks in the history of religion." 1

### Method of Investigation

The scientific procedure will be followed as closely as possible throughout this thesis.

Chapter 2 provides a description of the setting of the investigation. This will include not only comments on the character of the writings known as "Second Isaiah", but a discussion of the "Historical Background", and "The Life and Times of Second Isaiah".

These form the outer ingredients for our investigation. But of equal importance are the inner ingredients of Second Isaiah's prophetic insight. Although difficult to ascertain, and to a certain extent conjectural, the elements of "Prophetic Consciousness" will be presented in chapter three, the complementary "inner setting", to match the "outer setting" of chapter two. Sub-sections of chapter three will deal with: "The Consciousness of God", "The Constitution of Human Personality", "The Spirit of God", "The General Functions of Prophecy", and "The psychology of Inspiration".

Chapter four will contain the major part of the investigation, sub-divided into 18 units. The study of each unit will involve: first, a brief summary of the subject matter contained therein, that is, the orientation of the unit within the prophecy; second, a discussion of

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1. W.O.E. Oesterley, T.H. Robinson: Hebrew Religion, Its Origin and Development, p. 261.



any words, phrases or verses which bear upon the purpose of the thesis. At the conclusion of each unit, a summary will be made of all contributions to the Concept of God, together with their verse locations, for purpose of reference.

Because of general resemblance and common problems, four passages known as the "Servant Songs" will be drawn together for special consideration in chapter five. Subjects discussed there will be "Identification of the Servant", "Character and Mission of the Servant", and "The Servant and Jesus Christ". The contributions of these passages to the prophet's Concept of God will still be given in chapter four, at the place where each of the four Servant Songs would normally appear.

Chapter six will present "The Results", in two sections: first, the 18 summaries will be gathered together and presented in tabular form, together with chapter references, to show which aspects of Second Isaiah's Concept of God are the most prominent, and where in the prophecy they occur; second, the Concept itself, based on the findings of the investigation, will be presented and discussed.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE SETTING





## CHAPTER II

## THE SETTING

Second Isaiah

"For several generations many biblical scholars have recognized that the material contained in Chapters 40 to 66 of our present Book of Isaiah are such that they could not have been written by the same prophet whose oracles are recorded in the first thirty-nine chapters of that book."<sup>1</sup> Doubts as to the Isaianic authorship of chapters 40 to 66 were first expressed by Ibn Ezra in the twelfth century. The hypothesis that they belonged to a later poet was formulated and defended by Johann Christoph Döderlein in 1775, popularized by Johann Gottfried Eichhorn in 1780, and is now widely accepted.<sup>2</sup> While some conservative scholars still hold that Isaiah, son of Amoz, wrote the whole book, most Old Testament critics place about one hundred and fifty years of elapsed time between the two sections.

The city of Jerusalem was still standing when Isaiah delivered his messages to "Judah and Jerusalem".<sup>3</sup> During the latter part of his ministry it had been delivered, in an apparently miraculous way, from Assyrian capture. Isaiah had said it was Zion's city which would stand for ever. But when we come to chapters 40 to 66 we find a changed situation. Jerusalem has fallen to the Babylonians. The Jews have been in captivity for a long time, and the author speaks hopefully of their

- 
1. C.H. Patterson: The Philosophy of the Old Testament, p. 270.
  2. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5, p. 382.
  3. Isaiah 1:1, 2:1.





impending return to their homeland. A long period seems to have elapsed since Isaiah closed his ministry.

The references to contemporary events in chapters 40 to 66 suggest a date towards the end of the Babylonian exile, and before Cyrus, the Persian general, conquered Babylon. The author tells us that Cyrus, Yahweh's servant, will bring about the city's fall, thus preparing the way for the captives to return to their own land. To the Jews themselves he proclaims a message of comfort, saying that they have already received more than enough punishment for their sins.<sup>1</sup> Their warfare has now been accomplished, their iniquity has been pardoned, and Yahweh stands ready to lead them back to their former homeland. He will even go before them, preparing the way, and removing all difficulties which might seem to hinder them.<sup>2</sup>

The messages which follow deal with subjects which would be uppermost in the minds of Jewish people who had been in exile a long time. The power and majesty of Yahweh is framed in language which convinces the mind and cheers the heart.<sup>3</sup> Idols are deprecated.<sup>4</sup> History is declared to be unintelligible without Yahweh's overarching purpose.<sup>5</sup> A new interpretation is presented to explain the suffering of innocent people in a world controlled by Yahweh.<sup>6</sup> These topics were pertinent to the experience of the exiles, but are not directly related to the

- 
1. Isaiah 40:2.
  2. Isaiah 40:3-4.
  3. Isaiah 40:9-11.
  4. Isaiah 40:18-20.
  5. Isaiah 40:21-24.
  6. Isaiah 53.



Palestinian scene at the time of Isaiah. Thus it is appropriate to regard them as coming from a prophet of the exile, who walked, talked and lived with his fellow captives in Babylonia.

There is much difference of opinion about the unity and authorship of chapters 40 to 66.<sup>1</sup> Earlier critics believed that this section was written from Babylonia by one author, whom they designated Second or Deutero Isaiah. But after Duhm's commentary of 1892, critics have narrowed Second Isaiah's portion to chapters 40 - 55, finding sufficient reasons to ascribe the remainder to a Third Isaiah, or a school of disciples of Second Isaiah.<sup>2</sup>

Although many problems of authorship have not been settled, for the purpose of this thesis we shall assume the position which is supported by many eminent scholars, such as North, Levy, Bewer, George Adam Smith, Muilenburg and others, namely that Second Isaiah was the author of chapters 40 to 55 of our present book, and that his ministry was in the period of the exile.

Within the unity of Second Isaiah just mentioned, two lesser divisions may be recognized: One, comprising chapters 40 to 48, and the other chapters 49 to 55.<sup>3</sup> Chapters 40 to 48 presuppose a situation before the fall of Babylon. The Jews are captive in the land of the Chaldeans;<sup>4</sup> Cyrus has entered the stage of history;<sup>5</sup> he has made rapid conquests east and north-west,<sup>6</sup> and is about to challenge and overthrow

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5, pp. 383-386, 397-398.

2. C. North: Isaiah 40-55, p. 18.

3. C.F. Whitley: The Exilic Age; p. 118.

4. Isaiah 43:22,24; 48:20.

5. Isaiah 44:28; 45:1.

6. Isaiah 41:2,3,25; 46:11.





Babylon's power.<sup>1</sup> These allusions to Cyrus' progress suggest that Second Isaiah was active in the decade before Babylon's fall in 539 B.C.

The historical situation represented in chapters 49-55 is on the other hand somewhat different. The absence of a reference to Cyrus suggests that Babylon has already fallen to his armies. Although in 48:20 we hear the summons; "Go ye forth of Babylon, flee from the Chaldeans", the actual liberation of the Jews has not yet happened.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, "the captive exile shall speedily be loosed",<sup>3</sup> and we later read "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence."<sup>4</sup> A restoration of Zion is envisaged;<sup>5</sup> tidings to this effect are being published,<sup>6</sup> and songs of rejoicing will be sung in the city that was desolate.<sup>7</sup> Such considerations combine to suggest that chapters 49 to 55 may be dated 538 B.C. or shortly after.

#### Historical Background

The Kingdom of Judah survived more than a century after the deliverance of Jerusalem in 701 B.C. During this time Assyria extended its conquest to include Egypt. "Sennacherib was succeeded in 681 by Esarhaddon; Esarhaddon by Asshurbanipal in 668, under whose reign of forty-three years the literature and art of ancient Assyria reached their greatest perfection."<sup>8</sup> However, the death of Asshurbanipal in 631 B.C., signalled a change. Nabopolassar, the ruler of Babylonia threw off the bonds of Assyrian vassalage. The Medes under Cyaxares

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1. Isaiah 48:14; 46:2.
  2. Isaiah 49:8,9.
  3. Isaiah 51:14.
  4. Isaiah 52:11.
  5. Isaiah 52:1-6.
  6. Isaiah 51:7-10.
  7. Isaiah 54:1.
  8. S.R. Driver: Isaiah, His Life and Times, p. 134.





asserted their independence, while Scythian hordes from beyond the Caucasus added to the general melee.<sup>1</sup> Egypt revived under Psamtik I (663-609 B.C.) and engaged in the power struggle, and Phoenicia indicated a similar intention. In Israel, Josiah (640-609BC) headed a national movement which succeeded in extending her territory to the North. The conflict between Assyria and the Medes and Babylonians resulted in the fall of Ninevah in 612 B.C., a crucial event. The Assyrian Empire was divided between two powers, Media to the north, and Babylon to the south. Pharaoh Necho came from Egypt to the support of the Assyrian king, who had taken refuge in Harran. On his way he called Josiah, king of Judah to account at Megiddo for his independent attitude and nationalistic ambition, and the king was killed. Finally, at Carchemish (605 B.C.) the Babylonian and Egyptian forces met, and Nebuchadrezzar of Babylonia, son of Nabopolassar, won a decisive victory. Palestine had now become a part of the Neo-Babylonian empire.

The change of masters left Judah's position unimproved. Forced to pay tribute to Babylonia, she rebelled at the first opportunity. The resulting invasions by Nebuchadrezzar (605-562 B.C.) led to the complete destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and a series of deportations which carried 4,600 Judeans into captivity in Babylon.<sup>2</sup> Isaiah's prophecy was thus finally fulfilled. The kingdom of Judah and the Davidic line of kings came to an end, and a part of the population faced an uncertain exile on foreign soil.

The division of power following Assyria's downfall proved unstable.

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5, p. 394.

2. Jeremiah 32:1,2; 52:1-30; II Kings 25:8-26.



Though an uneasy balance was preserved for more than half a century, the situation changed with the appearance in Persia of Cyrus, king of Elam. In a vigorous three-year campaign opening in 553 B.C., Cyrus overthrew Astyages (584-550 B.C.) and replaced him as ruler of Media, thus laying the foundation of the Medo-Persian Empire, which dominated the Near East for over two hundred years. In 546 B.C. Cyrus became king of Persia, and in 540 B.C. he defeated Croesus, King of Lydia, and rapidly overran Asia minor. In 539 B.C. he turned towards Babylon. Nabonidus (556-538 B.C.) had lost the confidence of his people and the support of the powerful priests by rejecting the Marduk cult in favour of the ancient moon-god. Cyrus defeated the Babylonians at Opis (539 B.C.), precipitating a revolt, and the way was cleared to strike Babylon. "Led by a deserted Babylonian officer, the Persians diverted the Tigris River from its channel and used the shallow river bed to enter the walled city. By means of this brilliant manoeuvre, on October 13, 539 B.C., they occupied Babylon without a struggle.<sup>1</sup>

The beginning of Persian rule brought the Jewish captivity to an end. One of Cyrus' first acts was to issue a decree (538 B.C.), allowing for the return to their homes of all peoples held captive in Babylon. He attributed his victory to the favour of Marduk, and may have feared Marduk's displeasure with the captives' foreign gods who had been given homes in his sacred city. The Biblical account of the decree relates it especially to the Jews, assigning ultimate rule to God rather than Marduk.

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1. S. Schilling: Isaiah Speaks, p. 81.





## The Life and Times of Second Isaiah

The Exile. After several years of restlessness the Jews seem to have followed Jeremiah's advice and settled down to life in the exile. "Archaeological and biblical evidence testifies that they lived in settlements in various parts of Babylonia." <sup>1</sup>

S. Caiger offers the following interesting reconstruction:

"The scene is the Jewish settlement at Tel-Abib by the river Chebar: the time, about the middle of the sixth century before Christ. The events which led to the deportation of the Jews from Palestine are now remembered only by the older members of the community. Forty odd years have passed since the first surrender of Jerusalem in 597 B.C., when the advance guard of exiles were driven hither across the desert. The final fall of the Holy City ten years later and its ruthless destruction by Nebuchadrezzar (586 B.C.) now seems very long ago. The majority of the captives have no personal recollection whatever of the hallowed sites of Zion. The last two kings of Judah, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, lie buried in foreign graves beneath the shadow of some Babylonian ziggurat. Jeremiah by the Nile, Ezekiel by the mud flats of the Chebar, have suffered a like fate. A whole generation have grown up who have to confess that in a physical sense Chaldea is their native land; they have been born and bred in Babylon." <sup>2</sup>

Second Isaiah was likely one of this group.

The Jews in Babylon were evidently not persecuted, although it is likely that they contributed to Babylonian construction projects.<sup>3</sup> Agricultural pursuits occupied many of the exiles, since they were granted free use of the land. In addition, the Jews were engaged in the mercantile life of the great Babylonia capital, hub of highways, and centre of commerce for the Near East. Many had their own homes.<sup>4</sup>

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1. C.F. Whitley: The Exilic Age; p. 69.
  2. S.L. Caiger: Lives of the Prophets; p. 249.
  3. C.F. Whitley: The Exilic Age; p. 72.
  4. Jeremiah 29:5.



Since they had the right of assembly for religious purposes, such small gatherings may have been the origin of the Jewish synagogue.

Since the temple and its associated religious institutions were gone, Sabbath observance, prayer, memories and tradition took on added significance. The Mosaic Covenant and the lives and teachings of the prophets were recalled to preserve continuity with the faith of their ancestors. Psalms such as 42, 129, 130 and 137 reflect the mood of the captives:

"By the waters of Babylon;  
there we sat down and wept,  
when we remembered Zion." 1

As the years passed, adjustment to new ways continued. Also, a new generation grew up to whom Babylon was home, and who had no great urge to move to Palestine. Such developments posed difficult religious problems. Babylonian cults exerted a powerful influence, with their highly sensual, colourful pageantry. The fact that Babylon was a successful military power may have tempted many to commit idolatry by worshipping Marduk.

In spite of this adjustment, many of the exiles were perplexed and despondent at heart. Unable to understand the catastrophe of the exile, they doubted the goodness or the power of God, who had allowed such suffering. Those who yearned to return to Palestine questioned God's ability to deliver them. Rumours of Cyrus aroused alarm. Uncer-

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1. Psalm 137:1.





tainty, threat of change, and a search for meaning, had the people reeling. Would a worse fate await them if Cyrus captured Babylon? To such a burdened people, Second Isaiah was called to minister.

The Author. Nothing is definitely known about the personal life of the author of Isaiah 40-55. His name, family background, birthplace, and the locale of his ministry are a mystery. But he is so familiar with conditions in Babylon,<sup>1</sup> and makes such frequent reference to it that Babylon is the most likely location; although Palestine, Phoenicia, and Egypt have all been suggested.<sup>2</sup> Nor do we know for what exact occasions his messages were created, the persons addressed, or whether or not he spoke first, wrote later, or vice-versa. "Apparently for him the task of hearing and proclaiming the word of God for his day was so momentous, and the scope of the divine purpose so vast, that he allowed himself to fade completely into the background."<sup>3</sup>

The passages do reveal something of their author's character. He seems to have been a spiritual leader amongst the exiles, profound in thought and feeling.<sup>4</sup> His sympathies were universal, embracing all mankind and nature.<sup>5</sup> His poetic and prophetic expressions could be severe, or extremely compassionate.<sup>6</sup> But above all he was God's man, throbbing with desire to proclaim his evangel of God's redeeming love to Israel and the world.

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1. Isaiah 44:24-25; 47:12-13.

2. S. Schilling: Isaiah Speaks; p. 84.

3. S. Schilling: Isaiah Speaks; p. 84.

4. Isaiah 40:1-11.

5. Isaiah 45:12.

6. Isaiah 46:8; 49:10.



His Writings. "Poet and prophet meet in Second Isaiah... He is the proclaimer of the Word of God as the other prophets were. But he transfigures the prophetic forms into great artistic compositions."<sup>1</sup> Second Isaiah connects the opening and closing poems (40:1-11; 55:1-13) by common themes which thread the independent yet interrelated units between them, with great literary skill. Such major themes are: "The infinity of God, who is both Creator of the world and Lord of history; the non-existence of other gods; the coming deliverance and restoration of Israel; the role of Cyrus; God's purpose to redeem all nations; the mission of Israel; the suffering servant."<sup>2</sup> Chapters 40 to 48 of this unfolding drama treat the imminent coming of God, while Chapters 49 to 55 deal with the redemption of Israel and all nations. The circle is complete, from the initial announcement of the Lord's coming with power to the exultant climax proclaiming the accomplishment of the divine purposes. Such skilled treatment, intensity of thought and expression make us agree that: "With the teaching of this prophet on the nature and personality of God we reach the zenith of Hebrew religious belief."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5, p. 386.

2. S. Schilling: Isaiah Speaks, p. 85.

3. W.O.E. Oesterley, T.H. Robinson: Hebrew Religion, Its Origin and Development, p. 259.



CHAPTER III.

THE PROPHETIC CONSCIOUSNESS





## CHAPTER III

## THE PROPHETIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Old Testament prophecy is a television receiver, on which the powerful beam of God's spirit traces the picture by which God is made visible. Our aim is to learn as much as we can of the pattern which was viewed by the minds of the Hebrew prophets, to aid us in our further investigation of Second Isaiah's own concept of God. In this investigation we will remember that imperfect reception in no way suggests a faulty transmission, but brings us running to check the set-adjustments; the contrast between light and dark areas, the sensitivity, the vertical hold (which keeps the picture steady), and the horizontal hold (which keeps the time element relevant), and above all, the correct station.

Our study will include; "The Divine Control of Human Nature," introducing us to such ideas as the consciousness of God, the constitution of human personality (according to Old Testament Hebrew thought), and the Spirit of God; then the "Function of Prophecy;" finally, the important consideration of "The Psychology of Inspiration. "

The Divine Control of Human Nature

Prophetic consciousness involves God, man, and a control line of communication from the former to the latter. These will be discussed in order, in the setting of Old Testament Israel.

The Consciousness of God. How are we to think of the consciousness of God in the daily life of an Israelite? Let us approach the pro-



blem by comparing his normal day-to-day life to that of a Christian believer today. For both, the greater part of life consists of routine, without much thought of God at all. "Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening."<sup>1</sup> Because most Israelites were farmers, harvest in the field, and successful family life were in the foreground of interest, while Zion and all it meant formed the permanent background of life. For us today there is variety of occupation, but still treadmill routine, complex "spare-time" practices, with a similar lack of opportunity for any direct consciousness of God.

Further, in such routines, men are committed to a definite course of action which they follow in a somewhat mechanical fashion. There is very little opportunity for the ordinary man to exercise free choice. The progress of civilization has largely protected him from the unexpected, so that whatever decisions he does make are more likely to be considered by himself as his own responsibility, than an act of God.

But in all lives, ancient or modern, certain events, which are neither routine-like, nor the exercise of man's own will-power, can be transformed into signs and omens of the activity of God.

Famine, drought, crop-failure, pestilence, defeat in battle, earthquake - these national calamities were explained by Amos<sup>2</sup> as divine warnings and preliminary judgements whereas we would surely call them natural misfortunes. Even where a secondary causation was recog-

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1. Psalm 104:23.

2. Amos 4:6-11.





nized, the process was still attributed to God or controlled by Him. Thus a divine oracle discloses that three years of famine in David's time was due to his failure to carry out blood-vengeance against the house of Saul; the famine did not end until seven of Saul's descendents were hung up before Yahweh.<sup>1</sup> Such a view of Yahweh's activity became repugnant after the teaching of the great prophets had been assimilated, so writings in the post-exilic period have Satan included as the instigator of evil, rather than Yahweh.<sup>2</sup>

Psalm 91 provides a striking expression of faith in particular providence within the general scheme of Yahweh's control of all actions and history. In this psalm a series of metaphors describes both the perils and the deliverances in concrete detail. No matter what the peril is, trust in Yahweh will remove anxiety, ward off particular "strokes" of injury and ensure His presence when distress comes. The psalm suggests that this aid is due to a ministry of angels, "those usually invisible servants of Yahweh who replace our 'laws of nature'".

"He shall give His angels charge over thee,  
To keep thee in all thy ways." 3

Although the earlier prophets and some of the psalmists preferred to speak more directly to God, the popular religion of Israel took seriously such "modus operandi" as angelic mediators of the divine command.

In addition to those corporate or individual events which broke into the daily routine, yet were not due to the conscious volition of

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1. II Samuel 21:1-4.

2. I Chronicles 21:1 and Zechariah 3:1 may be compared.

3. Psalm 91:11.



man, there were others, often of a trivial or ordinary nature, which were capable of some deeper reference or meaning. These played a great part in early Hebrew life, giving rise, for example, to much of the science and art of divination.

The Hebrew word for a happening or event is (מקרה). The corresponding verb (קרא) or (קרא) means an encounter or meeting, as when Amalek "met" Israel by the way with hostility,<sup>1</sup> or when Yahweh "met" with Israel as represented by Moses.<sup>2</sup> The verb is used of past or future happenings as that which "meets" man. What happens in such a chance happening can be good or evil, and may be to some extent under man's control. If no divine intention can be traced, a "happening or event" drops into the routine of life. Dr. H. Wheeler Robinson doubts that Israel's faith in providence derived its unshakable strength from the grounding of all events without exception in the activity of God. He continues:

"We should rather say that any event could be so grounded, but that the average Israelite, like ourselves, probably left a good deal of his life out of any conscious relation to God. On the other hand, he was far readier than most of us would be to see a particular providence in any happening, if its context suggested this." <sup>3</sup>

In both the ancient and modern situations under consideration, the subjective element of the religious fact cannot be eliminated: "the unit of revelation is not the event but the interpreted event."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Deuteronomy 25:18.

2. Exodus 3:18.

3. H.N. Robinson: Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, p. 69.

4. Ibid.





Constitution of Human Personality. Thus far we have considered man's relationship to the events of his external environment. A consideration of the Hebrew conception of human personality is now in order, because inspiration and revelation are both conditioned by the way in which human nature is thought to be accessible to God.

The Hebrew conception of personality was concrete and religious, not metaphysical and abstract. All life phenomena and consciousness were ascribed to a principle which was identified with breath. This may be seen from the creation story in which Yahweh blows into man's nostrils "living breath" to animate the body which He has already made. As a result man becomes "a living being" (חַי נֶפֶשׁ) possessing "life breath" (נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה), not a living soul, according to Greek thinking (which has been preserved by our English translations). (נֶפֶשׁ) "is not a spiritual entity which enters the body at birth and leaves it at death; it is simply a principle of life which makes the body effective, and the body a real basis of personality."<sup>1</sup> (נֶפֶשׁ) is not used in the Old Testament of a disembodied soul or spirit. The importance of this concept is that since man is created, and continues "to be", by the grace of God, he has no independence over against God, such as a Greek view of "psyche" might suggest.<sup>2</sup> At death he ceases "to be" in any real sense, because the animating principle is no longer evident.

A second important aspect of Hebrew psychology affecting the relationship between God and man is what may be termed "corporate personality"

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1. H.W. Robinson: Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, p. 70.  
 2. Ibid.



meaning the close relation between the individual and the group to which he belongs. The new covenant of Jeremiah, although individualistic in method, is still a covenant "with the house of Israel".<sup>1</sup> Israel's relation to God was throughout corporate, although it progressively developed the sense of a more individual relation to Him, within and through the group. Thus the conception of Israel in Isaiah 53 is so impressively individualized, that it may be taken as referring to a single Israelite (see the discussion of "The Servant Songs" in Chapter 5). This fluidity or elasticity of reference, the easy backwards and forwards movement between singular and plural, is an important psychological fact affecting the whole relation of God and man in the Old Testament.

As we have seen, the true approach to the Hebrew conception of personality is through the body not the soul. The Hebrew had no idea that the body was a unified organism under the central control of the brain and nervous system, as do we. To him the brain was the "marrow of the head."<sup>2</sup> Nor was he familiar with the circulatory system. He saw the body as an assortment of separate organs, some central, some peripheral, each with its own set of attributes and functions, which were psychical and ethical, as well as physical. Not only did the liver, heart, kidneys and bowels possess a quasi-consciousness of their own, but so also did the ear, eye, hand, tongue, foot. This would be Elisha's reason for putting body to body, eye to eye, mouth to mouth, hands to hands, when he restored to life

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1. Jeremiah 31:33.

2. H.W. Robinson: Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, p. 71.





the Shunamite's child.<sup>1</sup> This "diffused consciousness" of Hebrew psychology would also explain a psalmist's reference to flesh and bones being conscious:

"My נפש thirsteth for thee,  
My flesh longeth for thee;" 2

and, "My נפש shall rejoice in Yahweh,  
All my bones shall say,  
Yahweh, who is like thee?" 3

The various parts of the body, (the visible external aspects of the נפש), made contributions to a "pool" or unification ("United States") of consciousness, a complex of localized functions, "the divisibility of personality".<sup>4</sup> (נפש) was the personality (vis vitalis) "in the sum of its totality",<sup>5</sup> the unity of personality expressing itself as will, the total personality acting as a conscious entity. (מחשבה) was the content, the motive power of man's aliveness - the ideas and feelings which inspire him. (מוח) was essentially man's reason, the chief organ of knowledge, the seat of intelligence and volition, the inner being from which sprang his will and action, - activated (נפש), or the "soul" functioning.<sup>6</sup> (The physical seat of the emotional states was centred in the liver, kidney and bowels of the abdominal viscera.)

This psychology is obviously very different from ours today, but the importance is that to the Hebrews, God could be easily conceived of

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1. II Kings 4:34.

2. Psalms 63:1.

3. Psalms 35:9,10.

4. H.W. Robinson: Redemption and Revelation, p. 142.

5. J. Pederson: Israel, Its Life and Culture; I-II, p. 104.

6. G.L. Vogan: Old Testament Religion; Class Notes 1960.





as taking possession of a particular organ in man, with or without his consent. Thus Isaiah's mouth was "cauterized" of its uncleanness that it might speak holy things.<sup>1</sup> "Such departmental accessibility, as we may term it, was a widespread conception in the Ancient world, and was usually accompanied by belief in invasive spirits or demons."<sup>2</sup> But as the emphasis on Yahweh alone built up, extant Old Testament records show that the occurrence of uncanny phenomena, instead of being referred to demonic influence became increasingly ascribed to the "Spirit of Yahweh", or to a spirit of, or from (רוח). This agent will now be considered.

The Spirit of God. A survey of the use of (רוח), spirit, indicates it to be the foremost agent by which God controls man. The term (רוח) occurs 378 times in the Old Testament and in 131 of these, it denotes "wind", whether in a literal or figurative sense. In 134 instances, it denotes supernatural influences acting on man (and very rarely on inanimate objects). On 39 occasions, the term means the principle of life, and 74 times it refers to the normal or permanent psychical life of man.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Robinson's conclusions about the various uses of (רוח) may be summarized as follows.<sup>4</sup>

- (1) (רוח) originally meant "wind" in a physical sense, but often the wind regarded as exhibiting superhuman power. The wind of the desert would be one of the most conspicuous phenomena in shaping the thought and speech of the nomad, just as it shaped his sand dunes.
- (2) It was natural, therefore, to ascribe exceptional displays of power in man, in view of his accessibility to external influence, to a wind-like power (רוח), especially

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1. Isaiah ch. 6.

2. H.W. Robinson: Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, p. 73.

3. H. W. Robinson: Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, p. 74.

4. Ibid; p. 75.



since the panting or deep breathing of a man under strong emotion linked itself with the blowing of the wind.

- (3) The most striking fact coming from the references, historically considered, is that in no pre-exilic writing is (נִשְׁמָה) used of human breath, or with psychical predicates. It is only from the exile onwards that the term becomes a normal constituent of human nature, as a higher synonym of (רוּחַ).

Summary. The following may be stated:

(רוּחַ) means "living being" or "breath-soul", due to the "life-breath" (נִשְׁמָה) breathed into him by God. It is the animating principle of life (Gen. 2:7), but includes no suggestion of violence. The body, brought alive in the above fashion, becomes the real basis of personality.

(נִשְׁמָה) is the dominating power in man which insures a particular line of action. "It stands for power, for life, and it is of God as against man",<sup>1</sup> and can include the suggestion of violence, as in Isaiah 42:1. In certain cases, the use of (נִשְׁמָה) as the life-centre of the body is very close to (רוּחַ), the animating principle. But N. Snaith points out that the true meaning of both terms are compromised when such late usage appears. The Hebrew (לֵב) or (לִבָּי) meaning heart, or that which is innermost in man, finds occasional use where (נִשְׁמָה) would normally be expected.

Thus (רוּחַ), (לֵב), and (נִשְׁמָה) intersect in meaning when they suggest some supernatural influence, and so supply a point of contact between God and man. From Psalm 51, verses 10 and 11, we see that

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1. N. Snaith: Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament, p. 143.





the spirit means in effect, the presence of God:

"Create in me a clean heart ( לב ), O God;  
And renew a right spirit ( רוח ) within me.  
Cast me not away from thy presence;  
And take not thy Holy Spirit ( קדש רוח ) from me."

On such inner activity of the "Holy Spirit", the prophets set their highest hopes for the accomplishment, in their historical context, of what their own warnings, stemming from the same inner spiritual activity, may have failed to do.

In our investigation of "Prophetic Consciousness", the foregoing considerations lead us to ask: "How do divine control and personal freedom interact in the lives of the prophets?" Dr. H. Wheeler Robinson suggests this answer:

"The freedom of man, however affected by external influence, is still conceived as really existing, and being somehow exercised within the protection of the divine control, just as when the prophet Hosea pictures Yahweh as a father teaching His child to walk, and carrying it on His arms when it is too tired to go farther. 1 The activity of the Spirit did not replace, but was rather thrown around the spirit of man ... the larger, the divine, included the smaller, the human." 2

### The Function of Prophecy

This subject extends beyond the horizon of human experience into the realm of religious and philosophical assumptions. The content of the prophet's own revelation cannot be discerned by psychological analyses

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1. Hosea 11:1.

2. H. W. Robinson: Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, pp. 76, 77.





or historical study. Its answer depends to a certain extent on our intuition of ultimate reality, and our general faith in religious values, as we examine the Biblical evidence.

According to Dr. H. Wheeler Robinson, Old Testament revelation operates in three general realms. The first is nature, which was more dependent on God than our modern ideas allow. Forms which we consider inanimate were very much alive to the Hebrew. This attribute of Nature became very explicit in Second Isaiah's time, allowing him to point with poetic pen to the whole "Vista-Vision" of nature, created, sustained, and transformed through God's constant, purpose-revealing activity. Second Isaiah uses eloquent descriptions of God's control of nature as argumentative appeals to that which Yahweh has done, is doing and can do at any moment:

"Have ye not known? have ye not heard?  
hath it not been told you from the beginning?  
have ye not understood from the foundation of the earth?  
It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth,  
and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers;  
that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain,  
and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in;  
that bringeth the princes to nothing,  
he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.  
Yea, they shall not be planted;  
Yea, they shall not be sown;  
yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth;  
and he shall also blow upon them,  
and they shall wither,  
and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble." 1

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1. Isaiah 40:21-24.



But the Divine activity in Nature is more than a background; it constitutes part of the revelation. Locusts, drought, storm, flood, lightning, fire, earthquakes - these were Old Testament means used by Yahweh to accomplish His purposes of judgement or deliverance. The prophets read these signs, became nature's audible voice, and completed the Divine-human transmission.

Secondly, the prophet was an interpreter of man, in both individual and social aspects of his nature. "The primary function of the prophet is to awaken the consciousness of Israel to the presence and power of God, and to evoke that inner spirit of obedience which alone gives reality to the ritual of worship."<sup>1</sup> In carrying out his job, the prophet offers his own relation to Yahweh as the promise and potency of that of Israel. It was in the prophets of the eighth century and onwards that the divine demand for the great social values in the life and worship of Israel became most clearly explicit.

In the third place, the prophet is the interpreter of history. The perspective of many generations, revealing a divine redemptive purpose, supplied the sanction to their utterances, and the flavour of their message. Changing political and social events were, to the prophets, firmly controlled activities of God. For example, consider Second Isaiah's reference to Yahweh as director of history in the following:

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1. H. W. Robinson: Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, p. 162.





"Who raised up the righteous man from the east (Cyrus)  
called him to his foot,  
gave the nation before him,  
and made him rule over kings?" 1

Although we have been referring to the prophet as interpreter of events happening in three realms, the essential fact was that his interpretation of them came to him as a word of God, to be proclaimed in His name, with His full authority within it and behind it. This "prophetic formula" appears once in Second Isaiah (the underlined words of the following verse):

"And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
And all flesh shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." 2

Three important aspects of a prophet's call are:

(1) The initiative is with God; Second Isaiah's call may be detected in the following passage -

"The voice said, "Cry."  
And I said, "What shall I cry?"  
"All flesh is grass,  
and all the goodliness is as the flower of the field;  
..... but the word of our God shall stand for ever." 3

(2) The prophets had a close and intimate association with God.

Comments Dr. H. Wheeler Robinson: "In this closeness of individual relation to God human nature declares its highest privilege and touches its deepest source of power."<sup>4</sup> The scene of the prologue in Isaiah 40:1 to 11

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1. Isaiah 41:2a.

2. Isaiah 40:5.

3. J. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah Vol. 2, p. 11, (Isaiah 40:6,8b).

4. H. W. Robinson: Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, p. 162.





is so sublime and elevated, that the prophet himself is all but lost. The setting is the council of Yahweh, where an important decision is about to be announced. The conception of a heavenly council helps to explain the standing miracle of Hebrew prophecy - the virtual identification of the prophet with God which allows him to say "Thus saith the Lord", or to give utterances even without this formula. He may, in fact, regard his human experiences as a reflection of the Divine, as well as the particular oracles which he is called to deliver.

"Just as in the human relation of corporate personality, there is an easy transition from the speaker to the whole group which he represents, and vice versa, so it was possible, for the prophet who believed himself to be a true member of the heavenly group to speak freely in the name of Him whose will said the last word, but whose decisions were also those of the heavenly council."<sup>1</sup>

(3) A third aspect is the liberation of a word of God, which becomes objectively powerful beyond the prophet's range of activity. He was completely detached from his own word, throwing it out to his hearers because he had to, not concerned to show how his own contribution would be incorporated with theirs, but supremely confident in the effective power of the word of God to accomplish what it would, where it would.

#### The Psychology of Inspiration

Since Divine revelation comes from a transcendent source, it can

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1. H. W. Robinson: Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, p. 170.



only be studied scientifically from the point at which it makes contact with our experience, and even so, will elude our full comprehension. T. Robinson identifies two classes of religious persons whose prophetic experiences bear on our study. They are the Seer and the Ecstatic.<sup>1</sup> Although these two classes coalesced before the middle period of the Hebrew monarchies, they were originally largely independent. They possessed different powers, and were characterised by different functions and behaviour. The ecstatic existed in Canaan before the Hebrew conquest; the Seer more probably reflects nomadic Israelite culture.

The typical Seer (  $\text{נִבִּי}$  ,  $\text{נִבְיָא}$  ) is Samuel as in 1 Samuel 9:1 to 10:16. He is notably a "man of God", in direct communication with Yahweh. On occasion, he can hear Yahweh's voice, and the name Seer suggests abnormal visual as well as auditory perception. The second sight and hearing seem to be to some extent under his own control, for people expect to be able to go to him with questions for which he can get answers at will.<sup>2</sup>

His principal function is to describe events past, present, or future, hidden to the average person. These events may range from national to private matters such as the location of lost articles. We note also that Samuel is alone with none to share his powers and labours, but he has the respect of all about him.

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1. T. H. Robinson: Prophecy and the Prophets, p. 28.

2. J. Pedersen: Israel, Its Life and Culture, I-II, pp. 157, 158.





The Hebrew word for Ecstatic is ( נָבִיא ), plural ( נָבִיאִים ) (translated "prophet" in the King James Version). The verb used of ecstatic behaviour is a reflexive form (Pi'el) of the root from which the noun ( נָבִיא ) comes.

"The noun occurs 312 times in the Old Testament, and its use falls chronologically into three distinct groups, more or less distinguished by differences of character and showing important developments of usage".<sup>1</sup> Before the eighth century ( נָבִיא ) occurs 88 times, 78 of which refer to the cultic prophets of Yahweh. But the phenomena of this early type was "ecstatic", consisting often of a fit or attack which affected the whole body. T. Robinson comments:

"Sometimes the limbs were stimulated to violent action, and wild leaping and contortions resulted. These might be more or less rhythmical, and the phenomenon would present the appearance of a wild and frantic dance. At other times there was more or less complete constriction of the muscles, and the condition became almost cataleptic. The vocal organs were sometimes involved, noises and sounds were poured out which might be unrecognisable as human speech. If definite words were uttered they were often unintelligible. Face and aspect were changed, and to all outward appearance the ecstatic "became another man".<sup>2</sup>

C.H. Dodd adds: "He behaves, without any conscious intent, so differently from the general run of men, that no one can doubt that he is "possessed" by some supernatural influence. The "strong breath" (ruach, "spirit") of the God is upon him. Here we meet the original sense of the term "inspiration".<sup>3</sup>

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1. H. W. Robinson: Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, p. 173.
  2. T.H. Robinson: Prophecy and the Prophets, p. 31.
  3. C.H. Dodd: The Authority of the Bible; p. 48.



The ecstasies frequently appeared in groups, such as the company of prophets encountered by Saul. The forms of their activity resembles that of the prophets of Baal and Asherah who appear on Carmel.<sup>1</sup>

The second period from 800 to 550 B.C. contains the majority (168) of the instances of the term. Many of these references are to the so-called "false" prophets, towards whom Jeremiah and Ezekiel stand out sharply. "Ecstatic" features are not so prominent in this period. The "true" prophets of this period gave outstanding ethical messages.

The third period is post-exilic, where 56 usages occur. The use is largely retrospective, and prophecy was in rapid decline. The forms of ( נָבִיא ) used in this period mean "prophesying" without any suggestion of abnormal psycho-physical accompaniments.

In early times the Seer and Nabi' were in wide contrast. But a note in I Samuel 9:9 tells that "the modern Nabi' was in ancient times called a Seer".<sup>2</sup> This means that during the early monarchy the Seer gave place to the Nabi' of the ecstatic variety, who became the direct ancestors of our great canonical prophets. Although this seems amazing to us, it would not have been so to the people of those days. Whatever his faults and theological weaknesses, the prophet was recognized as an enthusiastic, obedient man of God, and he could thus be used to show what God was really like.

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1. H. W. Robinson: Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, p. 174.
  2. T. H. Robinson: Prophecy and the Prophets, p. 35.





The important question to be considered now is, how did the prophet become convinced that Yahweh was speaking to him and through him? Can we penetrate the mystery which lies behind the words "thus saith Yahweh"? The answer may depend on four basic Hebrew conceptions outlined by Dr. H. Wheeler Robinson:<sup>1</sup>

Invasive Energies. In the ancient world, belief in the accessibility of human personality to invasion by some external spirit or energy was widespread. The development of (  $\Pi\lambda$  ) shows the link between inspiration and such beliefs. (  $\Pi\lambda$  ) meaning "spirit" was demonic or impersonal in Hosea's "spirit of whoredom",<sup>2</sup> but the same word could denote the energy of Yahweh himself as in the Samson stories. "Possession", denoting invasion, is a better word than the term "ecstatic," (as discussed earlier, p. 29), because ecstatic is of Greek origin, and thus out of harmony with Hebrew psychology. "Ecstasy" implies that the psyche can leave the body and travel in other regions. But the Hebrews could not feature a disembodied "soul", since the body itself constituted the real personality. The Hebrew (  $\Psi\Delta$  ) is not equivalent to psyche, but rather the animating principle, as previously explained.

Possession by Invasive Energies. This can take place because of the Hebrew conception of diffused consciousness or localized psychical function, discussed earlier. It was much simpler for the Hebrews than for ourselves to believe in inspiration; an invasive energy could "take over" any body organ, such as mouth and tongue, and use it in quasi-independence of its owner.

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1. H. W. Robinson: Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, p. 178.
  2. Hosea 4:12; 5:4.





Objective Assessment of Subjective Phenomena. Dreams and visions may today be interpreted objectively as due to some abnormal psychological condition of the percipient. But these modern explanations were not available to the Hebrews of the Old Testament times. The unfamiliar voice, or thing seen would be ascribed to a supernatural source, and occasionally to Yahweh himself. If we share the faith of the Old Testament, we must certainly have to understand the divine activity as much more elaborate and direct, involving secondary mediation of psychical conditions, effectively controlled by God for the purpose of revelation. "Scientific knowledge can never invalidate religious faith, however much it may lead to the restatement of the ways and means of God."<sup>1</sup>

Symbolic Acts of the Prophets. The prophet was a man under orders to do what Yahweh wanted done. Even speaking was doing, to the Hebrew, (דבר means "word" or "thing"), just as doing was speaking. The slang phrase "Actions speak louder than words", is apt in this connection, as for example, Hosea's relations with Gomer. "All these acts are words, significant words with a meaning deeper than lies on the surface; they serve to initiate the divine activity amid human affairs by performing in miniature that which Yahweh is performing on a larger scale ..."<sup>2</sup> Hebrew prophecy takes its true place as the greatest achievement of Hebrew piety, and it was every true prophet's desire that his obedience

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1. H.W. Robinson: Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, p. 184.
  2. H.W. Robinson: Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, p. 185.



might be extended far and wide to every child of God.

"Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets,  
and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!"

Numbers 11:29





## CHAPTER IV.

### THE INVESTIGATION



## CHAPTER IV

## THE INVESTIGATION

1. The God Who Restores - Chapter 40, Verses 1 to 11

This passage forms an overture to the entire prophecy of Second Isaiah. It came at a turning point in history. Historians call it the end of the Babylonian and the start of the Persian period. A contemporary of this crisis, our nameless Second Isaiah saw it as the climactic hour when God was arriving on the human scene to establish an ultimate divine order. Although it has not proved to be the final event in history, as he envisioned, still it inaugurated spiritually a new day with good tidings of God. The glory and gospel of God was revealed to this seer. He saw:

"God, creator and sovereign of all nations; God at work in history, in judgment and redemption; God's gracious forgiveness of his sinful people; God educating them for the evangelization of mankind, and when they proved unresponsive, God choosing, training, and empowering from among them his servant church to win to him all peoples; God employing the vicarious suffering of his righteous servant to bring the nations to repentance and to life with him; God for his own love's sake initiating and carrying to completion the salvation of the world." 1

The word of the Lord which was to Second Isaiah both enlightening and potent to accomplish its purpose, foreshadows "the word made flesh ... full of grace and truth,"<sup>2</sup> which is the finale to the Old Testament overture.

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5, p. 423.  
 2. John 1:14.



Three motifs which recur frequently throughout Second Isaiah are introduced in this prologue. They are beamed directly to the plight of apprehensive, perplexed and frustrated exiles. They are:

- a) God working redemptively in History.
- b) Man's frailty and impermanence.
- c) The mission of Israel, God's chosen, to mankind.

The scene opens in the council of Yahweh. This sublime background accounts for the atmosphere and mood of the poems. "The bonds of nature are broken and an event of decisive significance is set in motion as a consequence of the divine decision."<sup>1</sup>

Verses 1 and 2: Here are both the keynote of the prophecy and a trumpet-call from the prophet to the leaders of Israel in exile. An earlier prophet of judgment, Hosea, had given to one of his children the name "Lo-ammi" (not my people):

"Then said God, Call his name Lo-ammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God." 2

This was a token that Yahweh had rejected his people, though he had prophesied that Yahweh would one day return to them in mercy and once more call them "my people";

"And I will sow her unto me in the earth;  
And I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy;  
And I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people;  
And they shall say, Thou art my God." 3

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5, p. 422.  
2. Hosea 1:9.  
3. Hosea 2:23.





That time had now arrived:

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people," saith your God."<sup>1</sup>

The repeated imperatives "Comfort, comfort", show the compassion and urgency of the message of imminent redemption which is to follow. This consolation (which is further touched on in 40:13; 51:6, 12, 19; 52:9; 54:11;) is in sharp contrast to the judgment which Isaiah is commissioned to speak as he participates in the divine council (6:9-13). "My people" and "Your God", recall the personal or covenant relationship between Israel and her God which is assumed as a central point of faith through Second Isaiah.

In verse 2, "Jerusalem", personified as a woman, is almost parallel with "My people." In Second Isaiah it represents not a geographical location, but an idea, the community of God's people. Reuben Levy sensed the penetrating personal message which is being delivered when he translated verse 2:

"Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and call unto her,  
that her toiling is completed, that her iniquity is requited." 2

To speak to the "heart" ( לב ) or ( לבב ), is to speak consolingly, kindly, gently, tenderly, to the total psychical and ethical functions of man, which the Hebrew associated with the term, and which today would be associated with the brain, (see discussion in chapter 3).

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1. Isaiah 40:1.

2. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah, p. 1 (Isaiah 40:2).



"That her toiling is completed", is the first momentous disclosure of Yahweh. The figure is military, and might be paraphrased "that her tour of duty is over." The next announcement of expiation of guilt turns on the verb (רָצָה) in the Niphal form, meaning "is accepted (as satisfactory)".<sup>1</sup> God has made possible a return to fellowship through forgiveness, just as He will make possible a return to freedom.

Verses 3 to 5. The prophet hears a celestial voice summoning angelic ministers to prepare a processional way for the return to Jerusalem. Ezekiel had described Yahweh's departure, alone, from the doomed city.<sup>2</sup> Now He is to return in public triumph, bringing the exiles with him. The route is straight across the desert between Babylon and Palestine. Every hindrance, valley or mountain is to be put out of the way:

"And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all flesh shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." 3

The "glory of the Lord", of which Ezekiel had been the sole witness when it departed from the city is to be revealed for all mankind (all flesh) to see. De Boer's equivalent to the King James Version is "Yahweh's lustre", while the Hebrew (כְּבוֹד יְהוָה) yields heaviness, weight, honour or splendour of God manifested to the pious mind."<sup>4</sup> (Second Isaiah also uses "Glory" in this sense at 42:8,12; 43:7; 48:11).

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1. Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 953.

2. Ezekiel 11:22-25.

3. Isaiah 40:5.

4. Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 458.





Any doubts which might have remained after the opening words of comfort are dispelled by the solid assurance that God can and has communicated -- ("the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" -- from the above quotation).

Verses 6 to 8. A second celestial voice proclaims the double truth: Earthly might is transitory, but the word of God is eternal. Man is but grass (Babylonia included), which can be as evanescent as the flower which fades. The agent mentioned is the Spirit of the Lord. The prophet's sombre mood reflects the despondency of his contemporaries:

"the grass withereth, the flower fadeth,  
because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it;  
 surely the people is grass." 1

The Hebrew word ( רוח ) means either breath, wind or spirit, with "wind" favoured here, likely alluding to the scorching east wind from the desert which could blast into oblivion Palestinian vegetation.<sup>2</sup>

( רוח ) is used by Second Isaiah in its other sense as breath or spirit of God in 40:13; 42:1,5; 44:3; 48:16. The text of this verse is suspect. For example: The phrase underlined above appears between the lines in the Dead Sea Isaiah Scroll<sup>3</sup>, and does not appear in the Septuagint.

Verse 8 introduces the important idea of the endless continuity of God with respect to his word:

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth,  
 but the word of our God shall stand forever." 4

Julius Beyer states: "The word which declares the purpose of the God of

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1. Isaiah 40:7.

2. Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 924.

3. Interpreters Bible, Vol. 5, p. 430.

4. Isaiah 40:8.



Israel for the world is as eternally abiding as He is, and sure to be carried out."<sup>1</sup> (דְּבַר-יְהוָה), on translation from the Hebrew suggests "a divine communication in the form of commandments, prophecy, and words of help to his people."<sup>2</sup> (דְּבַר) is used again in this sense in 45:23; 51:16; 55:11.

"The word of our God" again emphasizes a communicating God, who has announced to Israel, by way of the Prophets, God's immutable world purpose. The reference is general, although the implied argument is that, just as previous communications in the nature of predications have been fulfilled, even so this new word of comfort shall stand, because it comes from the same God who can dissolve the mightiest combinations of human power by His greater power.

Verses 9 and 10. The procession has now reached the outskirts of Jerusalem. The inhabitants are urged to climb a height of land, there to raise the strong cry "Behold your God."<sup>3</sup> Everything from the beginning of the prophecy has been a preparation for this final word. Zion-Jerusalem is addressed as a herald, and she is commissioned to proclaim the good news of the coming of God, whose glory all the world is to see. R. Levy catches the eager, intense notes of verse 9:

"Upon a high hill get thee up, glad herald, Zion;  
Lift up thy voice with strength, glad herald, Jerusalem;  
Lift (it) up, fear not;  
Say unto the cities of Judah: Behold your God. 4

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1. J.A. Bower: The Book of Isaiah; Vol. 2, p. 11.
  2. Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 182.
  3. Isaiah 40:9.
  4. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah, pp. 117, 118, (Isaiah 40:9).





She must tell of God's conquest and victory, the bringing in of His kingdom, the institution of His sovereignty, and His act of justice (verse 10). "Thus the announcements and decisions of heaven descend to earth; the heavenly voices become the immediate demands of Israel's sacred history, and the way is prepared for the vast panorama of history and eschatology which is to follow."<sup>1</sup>

The God who now returns leading His exiles is the same as the God who once led His people out of Egypt "with mighty hand and outstretched arm."<sup>2</sup> As the prophecy proceeds, the return from Babylon is seen to resemble a second Exodus.

Verse 11. The words of this coda fall as gently as a benediction, and we hear again the notes of comforting love with which this prologue began. "The arm raised in triumph is lowered in compassion."<sup>3</sup> Two qualities which are central ideas of Second Isaiah co-exist in the figure of the shepherd - strength, and gentleness:

"He shall feed his flock like a shepherd;  
he shall gather the lambs with his arm,  
and carry them in his bosom,  
and shall gently lead those that are with young."<sup>4</sup>

This is confirmed from the Masoretic Text ( כרעה עדרו 'רעה ), which can be translated: Like a shepherd his flock he will feed. The noun shepherd ( רעה ) is derived from the verb, pasture, but also contains the meaning ruler.<sup>5</sup> This figure appears again in 44:28.

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5, p. 431.
  2. Deuteronomy 4:34.
  3. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5, p. 434.
  4. Isaiah 40:11.
  5. Brown, Driver and Briggs: p. 944.





Summary. The contributions of this section to the concept of God are numerous. They are listed below, in order of appearance, followed by the verses in which the descriptive word may find elaboration. No discussion is presented here, as this will be handled in chapter six entitled "The Results", when the various summaries will be gathered together.

<u>The Concept</u>	<u>Pertinent Verses</u>
Comforter	1
Personal	1,3,9,11
Glory	5
Universal	5
Communicating	5,8
Active Spirit	7
Strong, Mighty, Powerful	7,10,11
Eternal	8
Eternally purposing	8
Gentle	11



## 2. God the Incomparable - Chapter 40, Verses 12 to 31

Here is a meditation on the immeasurable greatness, power and wisdom of Yahweh the Creator, as displayed in the works of nature and in the government of the world, an amplification of the idea introduced in verses 6 to 8. The passage is in the form of a monologue and the speaker is Yahweh himself:

"To whom then will ye liken me,  
or shall I be equal?" saith the Holy One." 1

Both the question and answering argument bear directly on this thesis.

Says J. Skinner:

"The argument from Creation is handled with a boldness of conception and freedom of imagination to which there is nothing equal in the earlier literature, and the frequent appeal to it on the part of this prophet may be held to mark a distinct advance in Israel's consciousness of God, coinciding generally with the period of the Exile." 2

The practical aim of Second Isaiah, discerned from verse 27, is to counteract the unbelief and despondency of his fellow-countrymen and to inspire them with some true sense of the infinitude of Yahweh their own God, who addressed to them the consolations of verses 1 to 11 already discussed.

Verses 12 to 17. The greatness of Yahweh is illustrated by the magnitude of His operations as Creator:

"Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand,  
and meted out heaven with the span,  
and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure  
and weighed the mountains in scales,  
and the hills in a balance?" 3

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1. Isaiah 40:25.

2. J. Skinner: Isaiah 40-55, p. 6.

3. Isaiah 40:12.





Also by the perfection and self-sufficiency of His knowledge:

"Who, hath directed the Spirit of the Lord,  
or being his counsellor hath taught him?  
With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him,  
and taught him in the path of judgment,  
and taught him knowledge,  
and showed to him the way of understanding?" 1

And by the insignificance in comparison with Him of all that exists:

"Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket,  
and are counted as the small dust of the balance;  
behold he taketh up the isles as a very little thing." 2

Verses 18 to 20. A satirical description of idols and their manufacture is addressed to the men of Judah in this section. Verse 18, which is repeated as a refrain later in verse 25, marks a significant stage in the development of the Old Testament idea of God. "The general term  $\bar{e}l$  ( $\bar{b} \bar{r}$ ) is here used for God, without any qualification, and it foreshadows the verse (44:6) '... beside me there is no God.'" <sup>3</sup> In the latter case, ( $\bar{a} \bar{h} \bar{b} \bar{r}$ ) which means one true God is used. The distinctive idea of one God only is emerging, and the magnitude of the true God shrivels the idol gods by comparison.

Verses 21 to 26. The thought of verses 12 to 17 is now resumed. Yahweh our all wise Creator is also Lord of history (verses 22 to 24).

In verse 25 of the King James Version, God is referred to as the "Holy One". P. de Boer's translation is as follows:

"With what then will you represent me  
that I should be like it? says he who is separate." 4

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1. Isaiah 40:13, 14.

2. Isaiah 40:15.

3. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah, p. 122.

4. P. de Boer: Second-Isaiah's Message, p. 5 (Isaiah 40:25).



The Hebrew for "Holy One" is (קדוש). The original content of meaning was probably withdrawal or transcendent separation from human impurity and sin.<sup>1</sup> In time "Holy One" ceased to be an attribute and became a unique proper name for God, as discussed in Rudolf Otto's "The Idea of the Holy".<sup>2</sup> This expression recurs 13 times in Second Isaiah: 41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14, 15; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5; 55:5.

In verse 26, Yahweh is portrayed as marshall of the hosts (stars) of heaven:

"Lift up your eyes on high and behold!  
 who hath created these things?  
 That bringeth out their host by number;  
 he calleth them all by names;  
 by the greatness of his might, for that he is stronger in power,  
 not one faileth." 3

The Hebrew word for "create" in this passage is (סלל) meaning to "shape, fashion, create."<sup>4</sup> It is used always of Divine activity. 13 times by Second Isaiah, more than any other Old Testament writer, suggesting his great interest and special contribution at this point (see 41:20; 42:5; 43:1, 7; 45:7, 8, 12, 18; 54:16). Before this time Israel had not been extensively occupied with cosmogony - especially in comparison with the great Near-Eastern cosmogonies. Martin Buber suggests a probable Babylonian influence in these lines.<sup>5</sup> Babylonia was the home-centre of star gods and star-worship. Yet Second Isaiah boldly states

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1. Brown, Driver and Briggs; p. 872.
  2. R. Otto: The Idea of the Holy; p. 78.
  3. Isaiah 40:26.
  4. Brown, Driver and Briggs; p. 135.
  5. M. Buber: The Prophetic Faith, p. 211.





that his God created the gods whom his captors worshipped! Here is indeed a high concept of God - a great and mighty creator, strong in power such that not one star dares to leave its post vacant or lag behind when it hears God's call.

Admittedly "it can hardly be denied that the cosmology of the ancient Hebrews is only the merest daub compared with the sweeping grandeur of the picture revealed by modern science."<sup>1</sup> This may be so. We can photograph the dark side of the moon and probe the ends of our galaxy with radio telescopes. Second Isaiah knew nothing of Einstein's special theory of relativity, and curved space.

"Yet the majesty of his description keeps pace with every expansion of the expanding universe. No discoveries of the astro-physicist will ever outdate this passage and Job 38, and it is safe to say that no more magnificent poems on the Incomparable will ever be written." 2

Verses 27 to 31. If such be the God of Israel, how can the Exiles possibly think that He is either unobservant of their fate, or indifferent to it?

The answer is given as a climactic blending of themes which have been developed throughout the chapter. God is everlasting, creator and controller of the whole extent of things with unlimited but unfathomable insight.<sup>3</sup> He gives power and strength as needed.<sup>4</sup>

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1. C.R. North: Isaiah 40-55, p. 43, citing F. Hoyle: The Nature of the Universe, p. 115.
  2. C. R. North: Isaiah 40-55, p. 44.
  3. Isaiah 40:28.
  4. Isaiah 40:29.





"Yet they who wait upon the Lord shall renew power;  
shall raise pinion aloft like the eagles;  
They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk  
and not be faint." 1

Reuben Levy suggests that the Hebrew does not give "they shall mount up with wings" as does the King James Version. His translation "shall raise pinion aloft" (see above quotation) suggests the surging power of an eagle in strong flight.<sup>2</sup> Skinner concurs, saying that "It is rather a description (and a very fine one) of the new kind of life which comes to him who waits on the Lord; he is borne aloft on wings of faith and hope."<sup>3</sup>

The idea of God has become as personal as a blood transfusion spreading by the osmosis of faith into all members of the body, where God's iron strength brings a tingling awareness of new life, new hope, and new power.

### Summary.

<u>The Concept</u>	<u>Pertinent Verses</u>
Creator	12, 21, 26, 28
Unlimited insight and understanding	13, 14, 28
Spirit, will	13
All-wise Governor of World	14
Mighty	15
Great	16
Lord of nations	17
"Only" God	18 to 20, 25
Lord of Nature	22, 26
Lord of History	23, 24
Holy One	25
Mighty, Powerful	26, 28
Personal	27
Eternal	28
Empowering, strengthening	29 to 31

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1. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah, p. 128 (Isaiah 40:31).

2. Ibid: p. 128.

3. J. Skinner: Isaiah 40-55, p. 14.



### 3. The God of History - Chapter 41, Verses 1 to 29

The first two chapters of Second Isaiah share an interest in history. God the creator was involved with history in verses 21 to 26 of chapter 40, while chapter 41 is important because it points to Yahweh's historical agent from the east and introduces the Servant of the Lord.

Chapter 41 begins with a gathering of the nations for a trial. It is a dramatic scene, with God in the role of Judge posing the questions, and finally giving the verdict by declaring His servant Israel to be the mediator of judgment, whose instruction will be the standard for judgment and redemption of all peoples. Two great debates are pictured: the first (verses 1 to 7) is between Yahweh and the nations; the second (verses 21 to 29) is between Yahweh and the idols. The subject in both cases is the appearance of Cyrus. In the passage comprising verses 8 to 20, Yahweh encourages His servant Israel in view of this great historical crisis.

Verses 1 to 4. In verse 1 the nations are summoned into Yahweh's presence, so that it may be seen whether or not they can produce an explanation for the rise of Cyrus:

"Keep silence before me, O islands;  
and let the people renew their strength;  
let them come near, then let them speak;  
let us come near together to judgment." 1

"Renew their strength" recalls the closing verses of 29 to 31 of





chapter 40 where the idea of God's power and strength was forcibly presented. The underlined phrase is suspected by several writers. Skinner feels that the thought is out of place at the beginning of an argument,<sup>1</sup> while J. Bewer offers the emendation "wait for me".<sup>2</sup> R. Levy suggests that the Masoretic Text (which gives "renew their strength") is incorrect, saying that something parallel to "keep silence for me" would be expected.<sup>3</sup> But J. Muilenburg states:

".. the appeal to strength cannot be considered entirely out of place in view of the presence of this motif in the lines following (vss. 6-7, 9-10, 13, 14-16). First silence, then the summoning of resources to meet the test, then the approach to judgment." 4

"Judgment" is from the Hebrew (שׁוֹפֵט), which can also mean justice.

But the meaning here is rather judicial proceedings, including the whole process of argument by both sides as well as the actual decision.<sup>5</sup> This connects well with verse 27 in chapter 40 where Israel complained that her (שׁוֹפֵט) had been passed over by God her judge.

The problem is now put forth: "Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings."<sup>6</sup>

The Targum, Jewish exegetes (except Ibn Ezra), Calvin, Torrey and Kissane consider Abraham to be the conqueror from the east (referring to Genesis chapter 14).<sup>7</sup> But C. North expresses the more likely

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1. J. Skinner: Isaiah (Chapters 40-66); p. 15.

2. J.A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 14.

3. R. Levy, Deutero-Isaiah, p. 129.

4. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5, p. 449.

5. Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 1048.

6. Isaiah 49:2a.

7. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5, p. 449.



view that the reference is to the meteoric career of Cyrus, whose victories had challenged the attention of the world,<sup>1</sup> (see "The Setting", chapter 2). Answer is made to the question:

"Who hath wrought and done it,  
calling the generations from the beginning?  
I the Lord, the first,  
and with the last, I am He." 2

These words of self-revelation, coming as from the mouth of Yahweh, recall the supreme revelation at Sinai.<sup>3</sup> Yahweh brings both creation and history into existence - then governs and directs its course to the end. He is beginning and ending, "the first and with the last". (This idea recurs in 43:10, 44:6, 46:3-4, 48:12).

"I am He", (אֲנִי - הוּא) contains within it the idea of God as the essence of existence, and is "an emphatic assertion of the personality of Jehovah (Driver)".<sup>4</sup> It is practically equal to saying "I am God" in an absolute sense, the attendant ideas being God the universal, God the eternal, God the ruler of all nature and of all the ages.

Verses 5 to 7. In their fear, the nations turn to the fabrication of new idols to reassure themselves against the conqueror's advance.

Verses 8 to 10. The trial continues, but suddenly the Judge introduces Israel as Yahweh's servant or client, "chosen in the person of Abraham, to be the organ of true religion and never since cast off."<sup>5</sup>

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1. C.R. North: Isaiah 40-55; p. 50.

2. Isaiah 41:4.

3. Exodus 20:2.

4. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 131.

5. J. Skinner: Isaiah (Chapters 40-66); p. 15.





"But thou, Israel, art my servant,  
Jacob whom I have chosen,  
the seed of Abraham my friend." 1

The name servant ( עַבְד ) has significant content here. It generally means one who performs some service to God (for example, Abraham,<sup>2</sup> Moses,<sup>3</sup> David,<sup>4</sup> and even Nebuchadrezzar, who was to be the instrument of God's vengeance on Israel, sending them into exile).<sup>5</sup>

But here, where Second Isaiah is building up the idea of the intimate relationship between God and Israel, "servant" is used in the sense of "worshipper", as in later Hebrew ( עַבְדֵי ) came to mean "Divine Service".<sup>6</sup>

The verbs used in verses 8 and 9, chosen, taken, called, enforce Israel's idea of a special close relation to Yahweh, that of Divine choice or election.

"According to Duhm, the reason why the idea of God's choice of Israel prevails so strongly among the writers of the Deuteronomic school, with whom Second Isaiah is included, is that J. has at last been recognized as God of the whole world and as the only God, though still remaining particularly Israel's God." 7

The servant reference characterizes the covenant people Israel, but throws the spotlight directly on Yahweh, without whose prior Lordship no servant could have existed. As Israel's great mission to the nations of the world develops in Second Isaiah, the servant motif takes on special significance (see Chapter 5).

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1. Isaiah 40:8.
  2. Genesis 26:24.
  3. Numbers 12:7.
  4. II Samuel 7:9.
  5. Jeremiah 25:9.
  6. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 133.
  7. Ibid.





A warm personal note is maintained through verse 10:

"fear not, for I am with you,  
look not around you in distress, for I am your God;  
I strengthen you, I help you as well,  
I uphold you with my victorious right hand." 1

In the above translation, P. de Boer has given a more accurate rendering of the underlined phrase than the King James version, which substitutes "with the right hand of my righteousness."

"Fear thou not" is a favorite expression of Second Isaiah, and when heard is like a pass-key admitting the possessor to the stronghold of our personal, powerful, available God. (Other references: 40:9; 41:13-14; 43:15; 44:2, 8; 51:7; 54:4).

Verses 11 to 16. Israel need have no fear over coming events, for by Yahweh's help it shall put to shame all its enemies and annihilate mountains of opposition.

The term ( $\text{בַּר}$ ), redeemer or vindicator, described a fairly common function in Israel's social life. It showed Hebrew family solidarity and denoted the person charged with the duty of avenging the blood of a relative or buying back alienated property,<sup>2</sup> or an enslaved person.<sup>3</sup> The associated verb ( $\text{בָּרַא}$ ) meant originally to assert a right by purchase—hence the thought to reclaim or rescue.<sup>4</sup> J. Bewer suggests that the use of the noun here "expresses not kinship but close

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1. P. de Boer: Second-Isaiah's Message, p. 7.

2. Ruth 3:11, 12.

3. Leviticus 25:48-49.

4. S.R. Driver: Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament; p. 418.



relation. The Lord is mindful of his obligations."<sup>1</sup> (See also 43:14, 44:6, 24; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7, 26; 54:5, 8 for noun uses, and 43:1; 44:22, 23; 48:20; 52:9 for verb uses).

The Holy One of Israel, (  $\text{קדוש ישׂראל}$  ) used as a title in verse 14 is thought to originate in the "trisagion" of Isaiah 6:3, and by such stages as the present passage, passes to the Rabbinical title "the Holy One" (  $\text{קדוש}$  )<sup>2</sup>. The significance of this phrase is again the unique personal relationship of Israel to her Holy One, and her response will be rejoicing and glorying in Him. (See also 41:16, 20; 43:3, 14; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5; 55:5.)

Verses 17 to 20. But Israel, in the misery of the Exile, needs refreshment. The attentive Yahweh will hear them and personally care for their needs. The illustrations which follow are suggested by the thirsty march through the desert. But as in Chapter 40, verses 3 to 5, "the material becomes a symbol of the spiritual, - of Jehovah's all-sufficient grace for the needs of His people".<sup>3</sup>

Verses 21 to 29. Proof of Yahweh's sole Deity is presented by showing that He alone foreknows the future (verses 21 to 24), and has determined the career of Cyrus (verses 25 to 29). When the false gods are asked to produce proof of their divinity, they cannot, nor have they given any articulate prediction of Cyrus' appearance, which secures Yahweh's position as the only true God, the "Chief of Combined Operations",

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1. J. A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 15.
  2. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 137.
  3. J. Skinner: Isaiah (Chapter 40-66), p. 15.





the real "King of Jacob" (יְהוָה יִשְׂרָאֵל) (or Israel - verse 21).

"Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know?  
and beforetime, that we may say, 'He is righteous!'  
Yea, there is none that sheweth, yea there is none that declareth;  
yea, there is none that heareth your words." 1

"Righteous" in this verse (יָשָׁר) from the Hebrew, should be translated  
right, or correct.<sup>2</sup>

### Summary.

<u>The Concept</u>	<u>Pertinent Verses</u>
Strengthening	1, 10, 13, 14
Judge	1
Ruler of nations	2
Creator	4
Director of history (fore- knowing)	4
Eternal and Absolute	4
Electing	8
Personal	8, 10, 13, 14, 17-20
Calling, choosing	8, 9
Upholding, helping	10, 13, 14
Righteous	10, 26
Redeemer	14
Holy One	14, 16, 20
Attentive	17
Active to care for personal needs	18-20
King	21
All-knowing	21-29
Only	21-29

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1. Isaiah 41:26.

2. J. A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 16.



#### 4. Israel, Servant of the Lord - Chapter 42

Chapters 40 and 41 were to a certain extent introductory to what follows. Nearly all the leading concepts of the prophecy have been already expressed, and the "dramatis personae" - Yahweh, Israel, Cyrus, the nations and their gods, have been assembled "on stage". With this chapter, Second Isaiah begins to amplify and develop the various ideas already touched upon, by means of which he is enabled to interpret Yahweh's action in the crisis of history at hand. The first which he takes up is the thought of Israel, Yahweh's Servant.

Verses 1 to 4. This is the first of four passages which are generally called "Servant Songs". The others are 49:1 to 6; 50:4 to 9; 52:13 to 53:12. The deepest problem of these sections arises over the Servant's identity. There is no general agreement, but the most favoured views are either Israel or an individual or both. These Servant passages are discussed at greater length in the following chapter.

Verses 5 to 17. Thus far we have heard Second Isaiah describe a panorama of prophetic insight. The eschatological events of the coming of the Lord were described in 40:1 to 11 under the title "The God Who Restores". "God the Incomparable", creator of the ends of the earth, was discussed in 40:12 to 31, and "The God of History", actively related in forming covenant history with his chosen people was studied in Chapter 41. Now covenant history emerges clearly and concretely (verses 6 and 7). It is viewed in the framework of creation (verse 5), and under the shadow of divine intervention (verses 9, 13, 14 to 16).



The "new" event evokes a "new" song (verses 10 to 13).

Several important conceptions of God are presented with realism and power in this section of Second Isaiah's message.

"Thus saith God the Lord,  
 he that created the heavens, and stretched them out,  
 he that spread forth the earth and that which cometh out of it,  
 he that giveth breath unto the people upon it,  
 and spirit to them that walk therein:  
 I the Lord have called thee in righteousness,  
 and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee,  
 and give thee for a covenant of the people,  
 for a light of the Gentiles;  
 to open the blind eyes,  
 to bring out the prisoners from the prison,  
 and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.  
 I am the Lord, that is my name;  
 and my glory will I not give to another,  
 neither my praise to graven images." 1

(a) "Thus saith God the Lord": The underlined words in Hebrew (יהוה אל) mean literally "The Lord God", but the Dead Sea Scroll gives (אל יהוה אל) which means "The God of Gods".<sup>2</sup> The significance in either case is that the Lord God of Israel is the one universal God.

(b) The creation theme which follows is appropriately written in hymn style, similar to Psalms 8, 19, 104, or Amos 4:13, 5:8. God the Creator (with the verb יצר used of Divine initiative and meaning "to form, fashion, create") is often in Second Isaiah's thoughts (See also 40:26; 41:20; 43:1, 7; 45:7, 8, 12, 18; 54:16).

(c) "Breath" (רוח) and "spirit" (ליל) are in parallel in

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1. Isaiah 42:5-8.

2. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 467.





verse 5 and have here the same meaning - the spirit of God, His invincible dynamic energy. At creation He "breathed" (נשם) into man to make him a living soul.<sup>1</sup> Man was also thought to possess spirit (רוח) in early times,<sup>2</sup> but the idea of God bestowing His Spirit (רוח) directly became clearer during and after the exile.<sup>3</sup> (See chapter 2, "Prophetic Consciousness", where these ideas are more fully developed). Ezekiel says:

"And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh:" 4

(d) "Righteousness" (צדק) in verse 6 refers to the purpose of God, "a steadfast and consistent purpose."<sup>5</sup>

(e) "for a covenant of the people" (ברית עם): This expression, (which occurs again in 49:8) is difficult to interpret but important. Brown, Driver and Briggs suggest that here is a concept of God who promises via prophetic communication, "to establish a new constitution with new institutions and precepts."<sup>6</sup> It is for this reason that God has issued His call, but with the call, He is active to "hold" and "keep", words of strength and courage.

(f) "To open blind eyes": "The agent is probably God himself,"<sup>7</sup>

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1. Genesis 2:7.

2. Genesis 42:38.

3. C.R. North: Isaiah 40-55; p. 64.

4. Ezekiel 11:19.

5. J. Skinner: Isaiah (Chapters 40-66); p. 28.

6. Brown, Driver and Briggs; p. 137.

7. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 148.



which is the concept of a God who can correct spiritual blindness, or "bondage".<sup>1</sup>

(g) "I am the Lord, that is my name" (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ): Name and person are one, the name signifying identity.<sup>2</sup> "Israel knows the name of her God; therefore she stands in unique and concrete relationship with him (cf. 41:8). But the meaning is more universalistic here. The pronoun <sup>א</sup>hu is synonymous with the divine name. It is Yahweh's revelation to all the world that he alone is God."<sup>3</sup>

(h) He will not give His lustre (כְּבוֹד) to anyone else, nor His praise to idols (verse 8): "Glory", in the King James Version, or "lustre", (used by de Boer) involves an idea of honour or reverence due to God.<sup>4</sup>

(i) God who knows the future and whose past predictions are now history, is referred to in verse 9:

"The former things, mark, they have come to pass,  
and new things I am reporting,  
before they sprout out  
I let you hear (of them). 5

(j) The praise song of the Lord's victory (verses 10 to 13) contains in verse 13 the picture of Yahweh as a "mighty man" (גִּבּוֹר) and "a man of war" (אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה). R. Levy gives a clear translation of the Masoretic text at this point:

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1. J.A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 17.
  2. J. Pederson: Israel, Its Life and Culture, I-II, pp. 245-59.
  3. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 469.
  4. Brown, Driver and Briggs; p. 459.
  5. P. de Boer: Second-Isaiah's Message; p. 10 (Isaiah 42:9).





"The Lord will go forth as a hero,  
As a man of wars he will stir up ardour." 1

The figure is certainly military, and J. Muilenburg suggests that "man of wars", (  $\text{אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה}$  ), may be a "literary reminiscence of an ancient war poem which lies at the basis of the present expansion in Exodus 15".<sup>2</sup>

(k) Verses 14 to 17 are essentially the Lord's battle-song in which there is strong anthropomorphism. The figure is still the successful military hero of verse 13, but there is a brief shift in verse 14, to the figure of Yahweh as a woman in childbirth. This is poetic, depicting the passion of God in relation to history.<sup>3</sup> He is in the midst of world events, active to bring His purpose to pass.

Verses 18 to 25. In this section the prophet addressed himself to Israel in its present state of blindness. The discrepancy between the "blind" servant here and the "perfect" servant in verses 1 to 4 is explained (by J. Skinner) as the difference between Israel as it is, and Israel as it should be.<sup>4</sup> God calls on the exiles to think about what they have suffered at the hands of their God, and to see in it the effect of their unfaithfulness to their calling, misuse of religious privileges, and disobedience to Yahweh's law.

"Righteousness", (  $\text{צְדָקָה}$  ) in verse 21, is used in the same sense

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1. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 150.
  2. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 472.
  3. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 473.
  4. J. Skinner: Isaiah (Chapters 40-66); p. 32.



as verse 6, referring to Yahweh's great and cherished purpose for Israel,  
His servant - to spread the knowledge of himself to all the nations.

Summary.

<u>The Concept</u>	<u>Pertinent Verses</u>
Personal	1, 6, 8
Upholding	1, 6
Electing	1
Only God	5, 8
Creator	5
Life Giving	5
Spirit Imparting	5
Calling	6
Righteous	6, 21
Covenanting God	6
God of World purpose (Universal)	6
Corrector of spiritual blindness	7
Knowable (identity)	8
Glory (honour)	8
All-knowing	9
Hero, man of war	13
Active in history to bring his purpose to pass	14
Capable of anger and vio- lence	25



## 5. Israel's Glorious Future - Chapter 43:1 to 44:5

The message of consolation is renewed. It is not just the mere return of a number of individuals that Second Isaiah has in mind, but the reconstruction of the nation which is to be the witness of God to the world.

Chapter 43: Verses 1 to 7. This section is closely connected in thought with verses 18 to 25 of Chapter 42, together with which they form a literary unit. But the contrast is no longer between the actual and ideal Israel, but between Israel in exile and Israel in the glory of its coming salvation. The theme has shifted from judgment to redemption. In Chapter 42 Second Isaiah reminded the captives that the author of their situation was Yahweh, against whom they have sinned - now he assures them that in spite of these sins God has not thrown them off. A new day is dawning, in which Yahweh will redeem Israel which He has formed and chosen for His own, (verses 1 and 2). He will ransom it at the cost of powerful and wealthy nations, so precious is it in His sight (verses 3 and 4). He will gather together its scattered members from all the corners of the earth, (verses 5 to 7).

Verse one contains several important concepts of God:

"But now thus saith the Lord  
that created thee, O Jacob  
and he that formed thee, O Israel:  
Fear not, for I have redeemed thee;  
I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine." 1

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1. Isaiah 43:1.





(אָרַן), meaning to prepare, form, fashion, create, of Divine initiative, was discussed at 40:26.

(אָרַן) means to "form, fashion, frame, devise",<sup>1</sup> and is used with God as subject of the action at 44:2, 21, 24; 45:7, 18; 49:5.<sup>2</sup>

The word (עָשָׂה) which is used in verse 7 with the above two words, is mentioned at this point because of its similar meaning - "to do, make".<sup>3</sup> (עָשָׂה) recurs in this sense of Divine creative activity in 44:2, 24; 45:7, 9, 12, 18; and 46:4.<sup>4</sup> (עָשָׂה) is used as a designation of Yahweh in 51:13 and 54:5.<sup>5</sup>

The verbs "redeemed" (פָּדָה) and "called" (קָרָא) are used in the prophetic perfect tense, revealing what is about to happen. The time of redemption is near. The order of words is significant: First redemption (see 41:14 for detailed meaning), then calling by name (which gives to Israel her identity, character, and uniqueness), and then the personal assurance "thou art mine". "Israel is Yahweh's special possession, a precious treasure. She is conscious of belonging to him, and this belonging is the source of her confidence and hope."<sup>6</sup>

Verse 2 continues this thought - "I will be with thee". The reason for all this follows immediately, in the first half of verse 3:

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1. Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 427.
  2. R. Young: Analytical Concordance to the Bible; p. 367.
  3. Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 793.
  4. Op. Cit. 2 above, p. 630.
  5. Ibid., p. 633.
  6. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 481.



"For I am the Lord thy God  
the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour."

"Holy One of Israel" is used in the same sense as 41:14, to suggest Israel's special relationship to her One God.

"Saviour" or deliverer (from the verb  $\text{יָשַׁע}$  "to save, deliver, place in freedom"<sup>1</sup>) is one of Second Isaiah's favourite designations for Yahweh (see also 43:11; 45:15, 21; 49:26).<sup>2</sup> The second half of verse 3 shows on how great a scale this deliverance is to be effected:

"I gave Egypt for thy ransom,  
Ethiopia and Seba for thee".

Reuben Levy gives a clear translation of the sublime conception of a loving God in verse 4:

"Because thou art precious in mine eyes,  
art honoured and I do love thee,  
Mankind will I give in thy stead,  
and nations instead of thy soul." 3

James Muilenburg makes this comment:

"The love of God serves as a motive throughout the poems, and here again Second Isaiah is true to traditions that reach back to the origins of Israel's faith. In the hour of redemption the love of God achieves its greatest work. The prophet exhausts every symbol at his disposal to express the depth and power of the divine love, and here it appears in a most spacious and universal context, drawn partly from contemporary history, partly from eschatological imagination, partly from the covenant tradition (cf., eg., Exodus 19:5)."<sup>4</sup>

Verses 8 to 13. The situation here is forensic, similar to that in 41:1 to 4 and 41:21 to 24, but with a new element, namely that Yahweh's

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1. Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 446.
  2. R. Young; Analytical Concordance to the Bible; p. 838.
  3. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 158.
  4. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 483.





people are summoned as His witnesses in His controversy with the heathen gods and their devotees. They are certainly unpromising looking witnesses, blind and deaf (verse 8). There are three parties in the dispute, the nations (verse 9), the Israelites (verse 10), and finally Yahweh (verses 11 to 13). The court sits. C. North suggests that "All the nations are gathered together" is the best translation of the opening words of verse 9. Can any of them produce evidence that they or their gods knew anything of the course which history would take? Evidently not. Then Yahweh turns to His own people -

"You are my witnesses - is Yahweh's utterance -  
and my servant whom I have chosen,  
that you may know and believe me,  
and understand that I am he,  
before me no God is formed  
and after me there shall no one be.  
I, I am Yahweh, and besides me there is no saviour." 1

"I am He" (אֲנִי הוּא) is the monotheistic formula described previously at 41:4 (and repeated later in verse 13 of this chapter). The above verses contain the additional ideas: God the eternal (first and last); God who had made Himself known (or communicated through His chosen witness and servant Israel); God the only saviour (a thought continued from verse 3). P. de Boer has correctly shown the cumulative force of the repetition "I, I am Yahweh" in verse 11, since "even", used in the King James Version is not present in the Hebrew. (Compare also 43:25 and 51:12 for similar emphatic assertions of Yahweh's god-head).

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1. P. de Boer: Second-Isaiah's Message; p. 12 (Isaiah 43:10,11).



What is expressed in the phrase "Besides me there is no saviour," is the living content of the word "God" in terms of what he does, of his relationship to men, and of his outgoing purpose. The word saviour connects with the climax of the great covenant utterance at the close of 43:1-3a ("the Holy One of Israel, your Savior"), where Yahweh's redemption is described, and it continues throughout the poems as a description of God's redemption."<sup>1</sup> This is well illustrated by the underlined climactic verbs of verse 12 and the concluding monotheistic proclamation (בִּלְבָד־אֲנִי):

"I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed,  
when there was no strange god among you;  
therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord,  
that I am God." 2

Bewer, Skinner, Levy, and de Boer all improve the phrase of the King James Version - "Yea, before the day was" (verse 13), along the lines of de Boer's translation:

"Also henceforth I am he,  
and there is none who can deliver from my hand,  
I work and who can turn it?" 3

The use here of the Divine first person gives immediacy and powerful impact to the prophecy. Second Isaiah has entirely subtracted himself from any attention whatsoever, with everything centered in God's own words. "Not only in Israel's past, where prophecy and history had wrought together for her salvation, but in the future too, God is one

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 489-90.

2. Isaiah 43:12.

3. P. de Boer: Second-Isaiah's Message; p. 13 (Isaiah 43:13).





and he is almighty. From now on and forever he continues to be the one true God in whose hands alone lie the destinies of Israel and the nations, and for whom there is no hindrance or reversal."<sup>1</sup>

Verses 14 to 21. Here for the first time, the fall of Babylon is explicitly announced (verses 14, 15), as the preliminary to Israel's restoration. The glory of this "new thing" will eclipse all "former things", even the wonders of the Exodus from Egypt with its wilderness march (verses 16 to 18). The prophet's imagination then fixes on the concrete image of the miraculous way through the desert as the emblem of Yahweh's saving power (verses 19 to 21).

The concepts of God both before and following the great news are significant. Second Isaiah does his utmost to stress the relationship of God to His people in what are, by now, familiar terms - their Redeemer (see 41:14), Holy One (see 41:14), Creator (see 40:26), and King (see 41:21).

The exact text of verse 14 is uncertain, but R. Levy offers the following translation of verses 14 and 15:

"Thus saith the Lord, your redeemer,  
the Holy one of Israel;  
for your sake I will send to Babylon,  
and all of them will I bring down as fugitives;  
and Chaldeans in the ships of their exultation.  
I am the Lord, your Holy One,  
the creator of Israel, your King."

Throughout verses 16 to 21, the Lord is personally active to preserve and sustain His chosen people, whom He had formed, by a method

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 491.





which is compared with the greatest miracle in Israel's past history, the Exodus from Egypt. (See also a similar passage, 41:17 to 20.)

Verses 22 to 28. In these verses we see that God is not acting because His people Israel merit such efforts on their behalf. He acts for His own sake (verse 25), as Creator and King. "The only motivation lies in God's nature, but his nature is grasped by Israel in the light of her election and covenanthood."<sup>1</sup>

"I, I am he who blots out your rebellions for my own sake and I do not remember your sins". 2

This is all of divine initiative, freely flowing from God's grace.

C. North rightly comments: "This is Old as well as N.T. doctrine." 3

Then follows an invitation to judgment, familiar in Second Isaiah (see 41:21-24; 43:9-13). But the expression here is in almost appealing terms, similar to the passage of Isaiah 1:18. The assembled people can present their case, if they have any, and God will explain why He punished them.

Chapter 44: Verses 1 to 5. Once again the present gloom is brightened by the promise of a brilliant future; the Divine spirit will be poured out on Israel, and strangers will esteem it an honour to attach themselves to the people of Israel.

Like 43:1, which also follows a reproach, this section begins with "But now", and is a message of consolation. Jacob-Israel is Yahweh's ser-

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5, p. 500.

2. P. de Boer: Second-Isaiah's Message; p. 14 (Isaiah 43:25).

3. C. North: Isaiah 40-55; p. 77.



vant, his chosen (see 41:8, 43:10). Yahweh made him (לשׁוּׁ) and formed him (לְבָרָא) (see discussion at 43:1). The phrase "from the womb" (also in 44:24 and 49:5), "means that Yahweh has watched over his people ever since they began to be."<sup>1</sup> The pouring out of waters and streams (verse 3), does not refer to return preparations (as in 41:17; 43:19), but to "an increase of the Jewish population, which will be effected by the outpouring of Yahweh's spirit".<sup>2</sup> The operations of the spirit (רוּחַ) of Yahweh were from the earliest times characterized by invincible dynamic energy (see 40:7, and chapter 2, "Prophetic Consciousness"). For the spirit (רוּחַ) as the creative source of life, see 42:5.

The only problem of this section is whether verse 5 refers to the reclamation of defaulting Jews, or to proselytes from the heathen. Bewer favours the former, while North, Skinner, Muilenburg and Levy support the latter position. Assuming the majority view, the promise here is seen to far exceed that of Chapter 43:5 to 7.

#### Summary.

<u>The Concept</u>	<u>Pertinent Verses</u>
Strengthening	43:1, 5; 44:2
Creator, former	43:1, 7, 15, 21; 44:2
Redeemer	43:1, 14
Calling	43:1
Personal	43:1, 3, 5; 44:1, 2, 3
Preserver	43:2
Holy One	43:3, 14, 15
Saviour	43:3, 11, 12
Loving	43:4

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1. C. R. North: Isaiah 40-55; p. 79.
  2. Ibid.





Summary (continued).The ConceptPertinent Verses

Glory	43:7
Maker	43:7; 44:2
All-knowing	43:9
Choosing	43:10, 20; 44:1, 2
Communicating	43:10, 12
Eternal and absolute	43:10, 13
Only	43:10, 13
Active to Pursue His World purpose	43:13
King	43:15
Active to sustain and pre- serve	43:16-21
Forgiver	43:25
Spirit	44:3



6. God Glorified, Idolatry Folly - Chapter 44, Verses 6 to 23

This section, which is a restatement of ideas already expressed, consists of three divisions:

Verses 6 to 8. Yahweh is again introduced as King ( מלך ) (41:21; 43:15) of Israel, and his redeemer ( גואל ) ( 42:14). P. de Boer translates verse 6:

"Thus says Yahweh, Israel's king, Yahweh Sebaoth, his redeemer:  
I am first and I am continual and besides me there is no God." 1

The expression underlined, ( אלהינו יהוה ) is frequent in the Old Testament, and is used by Second Isaiah here and in 45:13; 47:4; 48:2; 51:15; 54:5. J. Muilenburg say it is "a title of the greatest import, describing the exaltation of God over all the hosts of heaven and earth".<sup>2</sup> C. North explains: "In early times the "Hosts" were the armies of Israel; later they came to be thought of as the stars, the host of heaven (see on 40:26), or as the Angels".<sup>3</sup> Apart from Yahweh there is no God (reference 43:11; 45:5, 21). "I am the first and the last" recalls 41:4 (reference 48:12).

The text of verse 7 has suffered in transmission, but deals generally with a legal process, presumably a challenge to pagan gods, with the resultant concept of God's unlimited knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

Verse 8 indicates Yahweh to be the ground of confidence in the coming,

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1. P. de Boer: Second Isaiah's Message; p. 15 (Isaiah 44:6).
  2. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 506.
  3. C.R. North: Isaiah 40-55; p. 81.
  4. Ibid.



cosmic convulsions, in that He has proved His control over these events by foretelling them. The question "Is there a God beside me?" receives the highly significant answer:

"Yea, there is no God ( ַלֵּוּ, Rock)<sup>1</sup>; I know not any."<sup>2</sup>

"'Rock', as a title of God implies that he is the unchanging and everlasting refuge and stronghold of his people".<sup>3</sup> (See Deuteronomy 32:4).

Verses 9 to 20. The question of the genuineness of this section is not settled.<sup>4</sup> Whoever the author was, it is an expansion of 40:19; 41:6; 46:5 and their associated verses. The argument is clear - the fuss and stupidity in the whole business of idol-making. This passage makes no significant contribution to this investigation beyond that just noted.

Verses 21 to 23. These verses are an exhortation to the exiles to lay these truths to heart (verse 21) and hold fast to the God who forgives their sins (verse 22) and who alone can deliver. Verse 23 is a hymn of joy called forth by the prophet's thoughts of redemption. The concepts of God are familiar: God "formed" ( ַלֵּוּ ) Israel (see 43:1), "blotted out", or forgave her trespasses and sin (43:25), and "redeemed" ( ַלֵּוּ ) her (see 41:14), being thus glorified by means of her (verb ַלֵּוּ ).<sup>5</sup>

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1. Brown, Driver, Briggs, p. 849.
  2. J.A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 23 (Isaiah 44:8b).
  3. R. Levy; Deutero-Isaiah; p. 172.
  4. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 505.
  5. Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 802.





Summary.The ConceptPertinent Verses

King	6
Redeemer	6, 22, 23
Lord of Hosts	6
Eternal	6
Only	6, 8
All-knowing	7
Rock	8
Forming	21
Forgiver	22
Active	23



## 7. Cyrus, God's Agent - Chapter 44:24 - 45:25

The distinctive feature of this important section of Second Isaiah is the prominence given to the person and work of Cyrus, the Persian conqueror, and divinely chosen hero. Earlier references (41:1-4, 25-29) have intimated that he is the destined instrument of Israel's restoration, but these have been secondary to the leading thought of the relation of Israel to Yahweh. But here, Cyrus is brought to "center-stage". He is addressed directly and by name, and the ultimate scope of his mission is clearly unfolded. "He is to set the exiles free, to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple; and the far-reaching moral result of his singular generosity to Israel will be the downfall of heathenism everywhere and the universal conviction that Jehovah is the only God who is a Deliver".<sup>1</sup> There are five divisions.

Chapter 44: Verses 24 to 28. This section forms an introduction to the central passage, which follows in the first 8 verses of chapter 45. Yahweh, still addressing Israel, describes Himself by a majestic series of attributes: Yahweh, Israel's redeemer (see discussion at 41:14) was He who formed, made (see discussion at 43:1) all things alone. "From the womb" was discussed at 44:2. Yahweh continues to say that He frustrates the diviners and astrologers (verse 25). On the other hand, He confirms the word of His servants (verse 26) and is active to bring His purpose to pass. Here the passage becomes predictive, suggesting that Jerusalem will be inhabited, the cities of Judah will be restored,

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1. J. Skinner: Isaiah (Chapters 40-66); p. 54.





and Cyrus will perform "all my pleasure" (verse 28), which should read "all my purpose". The word is (יִצְחָק) meaning "the good pleasure, will, purpose of Yahweh",<sup>1</sup> also used in this sense at 46:10 and 48:14.

Chapter 45: Verses 1 to 8. Yahweh now addresses Cyrus personally, promising to him an uninterrupted career of victory (verses 1 to 3); yet it is in the interest of Israel that he, a stranger to the true God, is thus called and commissioned (verse 4); and the final issue of his achievements will be a general recognition throughout the world of Yahweh's sole Godhead (verses 5 to 7). Verse 8 is a poetic interlude like 42:10 and the following, or 44:23 and the following.

The phrase "whose right hand I have holden", is used of Israel in 41:13 and 42:6, and indicates a very personal intimate relation to Yahweh. "In Babylonia kings were said to grasp the hands of the god Marduk at their accession, and there is actually extant an incscription of Cyrus in which he says that Marduk (!) took him by the hand and called him by name (cf. v. 3 here) and gave him rule over the entire world. Since this inscription is later than the fall of Babylon, "DI" (Second Isaiah) cannot have borrowed from it".<sup>2</sup> "The many affinities between the Cylinder and Second Isaiah have been explained as indicating some relationship of the prophet to the court of Cyrus ... Others have explained them as due to the use of Babylonian court style. A common Semitic speech is reflected here."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 343.
  2. C.R. North: Isaiah 40-55; p. 88.
  3. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 523.



Two primary titles in verse 4 express God's election of Israel, "servant", and "elect" (or chosen). See also 41:8; 42:1; 43:10; 44:1-2; 49:3-6.

P. de Boer translates verses 5 and 6 as follows:

"I am Yahweh, and there is no other  
besides me there is no God,  
I gird you, though you do not know me,  
that men may know from the rising of the sun,  
and from the west that there is none besides me.  
I am Yahweh, and there is no other." 1

"History is under the control of but one God; therefore it has an ultimate unity ... Not only for the sake of Israel, the chosen people, does God call Cyrus (verse 4), but also that all men everywhere may know that there is but one God. History, like creation, witnesses to his oneness."<sup>2</sup>

Verse 7 continues the monotheistic assertion, in a climax which is similar to the opening verse 44:24.

"I am forming light and ordering darkness,  
making welfare (good) and ordering disaster,  
I am Yahweh doing all these things." 3

De Boer ~~has~~ wisely changed the underlined words from the King James Ver-  
sion, which employed "peace" and "evil". J. Muilenburg notes that "in-  
stead of ( 𐤓𐤏𐤕 ), peace, the Dead Sea Scroll reads ( 𐤌𐤍𐤕 ) "good",<sup>4</sup>  
while J. Bewer says that by "evil" is meant physical evil, such as cala-  
mity or disaster.<sup>5</sup>

1. P. de Boer: Second-Isaiah's Message; p. 18, (Isaiah 45:5,6).
2. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5, p. 524.
3. Op. Cit., 1 above (Isaiah 45:7).
4. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5, p.525.
5. J. A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 25.





Verse 8 is a hymnic conclusion to the preceding verses. Although there is textual disorder in the middle of the verse, the use of righteousness requires consideration. Two Hebrew words are used here for righteousness, that which "the skies pour down," (רַצָּה), and that which is to "spring up together" from the earth, (הִרְצָה). "The figure might suggest that (רַצָּה) is the cause of which (הִרְצָה) is the effect; the former being the divine "right" which establishes salvation, and the latter the human order which is an element of it. But any such distinction is precarious."<sup>1</sup> The comprehensive meaning of (רַצָּה-הִרְצָה) used here, is "righteousness as vindicated, justification in controversy with enemies and troubles, deliverance, victory, prosperity", and all this is "of God, as covenant-keeping, in redemption."<sup>2</sup> Salvation (יְשׁוּעָה) which usually means "deliverance", is here thought to be used in its wider sense of "welfare".<sup>3</sup> In conclusion, the Lord has "created" all (כָּל) - "all parts of the universe, as well as to 'right', 'righteousness', and 'salvation'".<sup>4</sup>

Verses 9 to 13. These verses are a warning to Israel against taking any steps to prevent or oppose their own deliverance from exile, even though it is to take place through an agent foreign to them. Verses 9 and 10 are the only invective in Second Isaiah, whereas the pre-exilic prophets often use this form.

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1. J. Skinner: Isaiah Chapters 40-66; p. 61.
  2. Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 842.
  3. J.A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah, p. 25.
  4. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 188.





"Maker" (נָצַח) in verse 9, is the same form used in 44:24, and means "former", "fashioner", "moulder", or "potter". "The father-son relationship (in verse 10) is not to be understood in terms of procreation, but in the biblical terms of lord-servant."<sup>1</sup>

The text of verse 11 is disordered. J. Muilenberg thinks that the Dead Sea Scroll probably preserves the original text:

"Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, who fashions the future,  
'Will you question me concerning my sons,  
and concerning the work (of my hands) command me!'. 2

God is creator of the world, which belongs to Him. He has the life and destiny of the whole world and its creatures in His hands. The personal note "my sons" refers to the Gentiles (see verses 6-7, 12-13).

"Righteousness" (צְדָקָה) in verse 13 means - "with purpose firm and sure",<sup>3</sup> (see discussion at 45: 8).

"Lord of Hosts" (יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת) was explained at 44:6.

Verses 14 to 17. The collapse of the heathen religions is here dramatically represented under the figure of a procession of conquered nations (the same ones mentioned in 43:3), who pass before Israel, as tributaries and slaves, acknowledging that Israel's God is the only true divinity (verse 14). In verse 15, the question is: "Who is it that refers to God as hidden?" The views of Muilenburg, Levy, Skinner will be accepted, "that the nations are here continuing their witness,"<sup>4</sup>

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5, p. 527.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5, p. 529.



saying that to the nations of the world, Yahweh had hitherto been a hidden deity. Now He is truly revealed as a "Savior or Deliverer" (יְשׁוּעָה), used almost as a proper name, as in 43:3.

In verses 16 and 17 Second Isaiah speaks, presenting in sharp contrast the confusion of the idolaters (verse 16), and the "everlasting salvation" (יְשׁוּעָה עוֹלָמִית) enjoyed by Israel, which shall never be turned into confusion (verse 17):

"But Israel shall be saved in the Lord  
with an everlasting salvation;  
ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded,  
world without end." 1

Verses 18 to 25. The discussion of Cyrus' mission closes in this section, with the announcement of a salvation which is as universal as it is eternal (see verse 17). Verse 18 is a hymnic introduction to a section particularly rich in its concept of God. R. Levy translates it as follows;

"For thus saith the Lord, the Creator of the heavens,  
He, the God;  
The fashioner of the earth and the maker thereof  
He established it;  
Not as voidness did He create it, for habitation  
He fashioned it;  
I, the Lord, and none other." 2

Yahweh created (סָרַס) the heavens and fashioned (יָצַק) the earth (see 43:1) as an orderly and habitable world. Great stress is laid on the divine personal pronoun "He" (underlined above) expressing the absolute oneness of God, closely related to His purposeful, divine activity.

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1. Isaiah 45:17.

2. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 193 (Isaiah 45:18):





Not only is Yahweh's creation orderly, but He has clearly communicated His word to man, and is accessible to him (verse 19). He speaks (  $\rho\tau\beta$  ), righteousness, which here means "God's promise",<sup>1</sup> of right things, true words upon which men may rely, as opposed to the confusion of idols.

At this point the survivors of the great world judgment and those who are alive after the destruction wrought by Cyrus are called together to consider the same question as in 41:1-4, 21-29; 43:9-13; 44:6-8; (underlined below):

"Tell ye, and present your case;  
yea, let them take counsel together.  
Who hath declared this from ancient time?  
Who hath told it from that time?  
Have not I the Lord?  
And there is no God else beside me,  
a just God and a Saviour;  
there is none beside me." 2

Note the two great concepts placed side by side in the above - "a just (better righteous -  $\rho\tau\beta$ ) God and a Saviour". It is because God is righteous that He is Saviour (  $\gamma\psi\lambda\eta$  ). Many interpretations have been made of the noun-form of "righteous" used here (  $\rho\tau\beta$  ). J. Muilenburg suggests that in its present association with salvation, it means "vindication, deliverance, or victory".<sup>3</sup> Thus salvation becomes proof to the world of God's righteousness.

R. Levy has referred to verse 22 as "The grandest verse in the

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1. Brown, Driver and Briggs, P. 841.
  2. J.A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 27 (Isaiah 45:21).
  3. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 533.



prophet's scroll":

"Turn to me, and be saved,  
all the ends of the earth,  
for I am God, and none else." 1

"Since Yahweh alone can foretell and interpret the course of history as revealed in his prophecies, he alone can save; therefore the nations are invited to accept the gift of salvation which he offers out of his grace."<sup>2</sup> Such a universal invitation is based on the reality and sovereignty of one God - "For I am God, and none else", (from verse above).

As human beings swear by God, so God swears by Himself in verse 23. (For the form of such an oath, see 49:18):

"I have sworn by myself,  
the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness,  
and shall not return,  
that unto me every knee shall bow,  
every tongue shall confess." 3

Here "righteousness" (קִדְּוָה) means that which will be verified - "perfect correspondence between God's word and God's deed."<sup>4</sup> "Word" (דָּבָר) in Second Isaiah is often regarded almost as having "substantive existence".<sup>5</sup> It goes out into the world filled with energy and power to fulfill its function, with "a spacious and inclusive meaning tantamount to revelation (see 40:8; 55:10-11)".<sup>6</sup> It is not just all nations, but each individual who will worship Yahweh, bowing in homage

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1. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 195 (Isaiah 45:22).
  2. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 534.
  3. J.A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 27 (Isaiah 45:23).
  4. Op. Cit. 2 above.
  5. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 195.
  6. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 534.



before Him, and making confession such as in verses 24 and 25:

"Only in the Lord, shall one say,  
have I salvation and strength  
 Even to him shall men come,  
 and all his opponents shall at last come full of shame.  
 In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel  
triumph and shall glory." 1

The text of these two verses is uncertain. The phrases underlined above are J. Bewer's reconstruction. He has substituted "salvation" for "righteousness", but whichever word is used, the sense of verse 21 is desired: "Yahweh's saving and helping acts of deliverance,"<sup>2</sup> by which alone, men can be saved.

#### Summary.

<u>The Concept</u>	<u>Pertinent Verses</u>
Redeemer	44:24
Creator, former, maker	44:24, 45:7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 18
Only God	44:24, 45:5, 6, 14, 18, 21, 22
Active to bring His purpose to pass	44:26-28, 45:13, 18
Personal, intimate	45:1; 45:11
Electing, calling	45:4
Righteous	45:8, 13, 19, 21, 23, 24
Holy One	45:11
Lord of Hosts	45:13
Saviour	45:15, 21, 22
Eternal Saviour	45:17
Clearly communicating	45:19, 23
Accessible	45:19
All-knowing	45:21
Universal	45:22
Promising	45:23
Strong	45:24

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1. J.A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; pp. 27, 28 (Isaiah 45:24,25).
  2. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 534.





## 8. God Carries, Carried Gods Collapse - Chapter 46

In this chapter, and the two which follow, Cyrus is only incidentally referred to. The leading idea is now the overthrow of Babylon and its gods, and the consequent liberation of captive Israel.

Verses 1 to 4. A contrast between the Babylonian gods and the God of Israel is presented. The former share the fate of their worshippers and are borne away in flight. By contrast Yahweh is the bearer of His people, as a father carries his children (from the womb - verse 3). He hears His people, supports them, and carries them to old age:

"And even to your old age I am He,  
and even to hoar hairs will I carry you;  
I have made, and I will bear;  
even I will carry, and will deliver you." 1

"I am He" (אני יהוה) is the familiar monotheistic assertion meaning "I will remain the same"<sup>2</sup> (see 41:4). "Israel knows but one God, because her whole history is a demonstration of his activity."<sup>3</sup> "I have made" (verb עשיתי) can also be "I have done it." "And will deliver," (verb יציל meaning "to be delivered, saved, freed"<sup>4</sup>), is in contrast to the gods, who cannot rescue themselves.

Verses 5 to 7. This passage deals with the folly of idolatry in general, similar to 40:18-20, 44:9-20. Although materials and labour are costly, the idol is still an idol, and its worship as futile as was the effort to make it.

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1. Isaiah 46:4.

2. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 200.

3. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 539.

4. Brown, Driver and Briggs; p. 572.



Verses 8 to 13. The subject addressed here seems to be the rebellious Israelites ("transgressors", see 43:25). The theme is similar to that in the parallel verses 9 to 13 of chapter 45, which inveighs against those who would criticize Yahweh for using Cyrus to accomplish His purpose.

There are textual difficulties in verse 8, but the emphasis on remembering and recalling gives us a clue to Second Isaiah's thought of God. J. Muilenburg comments: "Israel's faith is authenticated and understood by the things that Yahweh has done for her, by the events he brought about and in which he made himself, his word and purpose and will, known. Israel appropriates these "deeds" in memory".<sup>1</sup>

Verse 9 joins historical memory and the oneness of God:

"Remember the former things of old  
for I am God, and there is none else;  
I am God, and there is none like me." 2

The connection is possible because "History's unity lies under the sovereignty of one God who works in history".<sup>3</sup>

There follows in verses 10 and 11, an appeal to the fulfillment of previous prophecies, similar to 41:26; 42:9; 43:9; 44:7; 45:21. What Yahweh has purposed (for "pleasure" meaning purpose see 44:28) shall happen. The best illustration of Yahweh's foreknowledge, referred to here, is that of the raising up of Cyrus, "ravenous bird from the east". (For other allusions to Cyrus, see 41:2, 25).

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 541.
  2. Isaiah 45:9.
  3. Op. Cit., 1 above, p. 541.





Verses 12 and 13 present a difficulty, in that Yahweh appears to offer "righteousness" (הַצְדִּיקָה, here meaning "salvation"),<sup>1</sup> to a stout-hearted, (obstinate) people. Some commentators (for example J. Bewer), follow the Septuagint and substitute "faint-hearted to whom deliverance seems far off" in place of "stout-hearted that are far from righteousness". But the opinion taken here is held by Muilenburg, Skinner, Levy, and North, namely, that the Hebrew is correct and means "the stubborn ones in Israel who oppose the prophet's instruction."<sup>2</sup>

These two verses therefore present a paradox recognized by Second Isaiah. "While salvation is near in point of time, yet Israel is spiritually far from it. Hence the work of salvation or righteousness has two aspects; along with the providential deliverance of which the agent is Cyrus (see discussion at 45:8), there is an inward and spiritual salvation which consists in bringing the nation to right thoughts about itself and God".<sup>3</sup> Israel is to be the instrument in this spiritual transformation, thereby receiving (הַכְרֵם), "beauty, glory",<sup>4</sup> as a gift from Yahweh. "The word glory here does not mean his tabernacling presence (גִּלְיוֹן)".<sup>5</sup>

#### Summary.

<u>The Concept</u>	<u>Pertinent Verses</u>
Personal	3, 4
Eternal, absolute	4

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1. Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 842.
  2. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 202.
  3. J. Skinner: Isaiah (Chapters 40-66); p. 72.
  4. Brown, Driver and Briggs; p. 802.
  5. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 543.



Summary (Continued).

<u>The Concept</u>	<u>Pertinent Verses</u>
Maker	4
Bearer	4
Deliverer	4
Active in history	8
Only	9
All-knowing	10
Active to accomplish his purpose	10, 11
Righteous (deliverer)	13
Saviour (deliverer)	13



## 9. Proud Babylon Humiliated - Chapter 47

This chapter closely follows Chapter 46 in mood and content. There the fall of Babylon's gods was described, now it is the fall of the city itself. These two chapters together prepare the way for more triumphant notes in 49, 50 and 54. This "taunt song" on Babylon's downfall displays the writer's great literary skill.

Verses 1 to 4: Babylon is described as a "delicate and luxurious lady of the harem, suddenly reduced to the shameful condition of a slave or a captive."<sup>1</sup> Scholars disagree on the authorship of verse 4, which contains the only clearly stated concept of God in this chapter. It may be an interpolation.<sup>2</sup> But Skinner says: "All reasonable objections are removed if we supply the word "saith" as in two Greek codices".<sup>3</sup> He suggests the following reconstruction of verses 3b and 4:

"I will take vengeance and will not be entreated - saith our Redeemer,  
Jehovah of Hosts is His name, - the Holy One of Israel". 4

"Redeemer" (בֹּרֵא) was discussed at 41:4, "Lord of Hosts" (יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת) at 44:6, and "Holy One" (קָדוֹשׁ) at 41:14.

Verses 5 to 7. Here the "taunt song" resembles a dirge, with Babylon, the imperial lady, fallen, no more to rise. Her loss of power was because of its abuse through cruelty to Israel, Yahweh's people and

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1. J. Skinner: Isaiah (Chapters 40-66); p. 73.
  2. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 205.
  3. J. Skinner: Isaiah (Chapters 40-66); p. 74.
  4. Ibid.





inheritance. (Note the personal thought in verse 6, reflecting God's covenant love and relationship with Israel). R. Levy translates verse 6 as follows:

"I was wrath with my people,  
I profaned mine inheritance;  
and I gave them into thine hand;  
to them thou didst show no mercy;  
Upon the old thou madest heavy thy burden exceedingly". 1

Verse 7 indicates that Babylon did not recognize herself as an agent and instrument of God, but was deluded in believing that her supremacy was eternal.

Verses 8 to 11. The word "therefore" introduces the calamities described in these verses, which shall come upon Babylon in her careless confidence. The indictment (repeated in verse 8 and 10) is that she has presumed to set herself up in place of God: "I am, and none else beside me".

Verses 12 to 15. The sources of Babylon's false security are here set forth. Astrologers, stargazers and prognosticators are called to stand and save her. But in vain. "The answer to the mystery of history lay not in the constellations or the movements of the stars, but in the divine purpose revealed in history".<sup>2</sup>

Throughout this chapter, the female personification of Babylon "forms an effective, and no doubt intentional, contrast to the figure of Zion, the desolate and bereaved widow, who is soon to be restored to

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1. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 205.
  2. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 551.



the honour and joys of motherhood (ch. 49:14ff, 51:17ff., 54)." <sup>1</sup>

Summary.

The Concept

Pertinent Verses

Redeemer  
Lord of Hosts  
Holy One  
Personal

4  
4  
4  
6

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1. J. Skinner: Isaiah (Chapters 40-66); p. 73.





# 10. Exiles Exhorted - God at the Controls - Chapter 48

This chapter is the climax and conclusion of the first division of the prophecy (Chapters 40 to 48 inclusive). Several of the major themes of the prophecy are here touched upon for the last time. "The references to the victories of Cyrus, the predictions of the fall of Babylon, the appeal to prophecy and the distinction between "former things" and "new things" henceforth disappear from the circle of the author's thoughts, along with other familiar subjects, such as the polemic against idolatry and the impressive inculcation of the sole deity of Jehovah."<sup>1</sup> The closing hymn of praise (verses 20 and 21) brings us to the eve of the departure from Babylon.

Verses 1 to 11. The main argument of this section is that Yahweh predicted the disaster which would overtake His people, so that when it came they would be unable to attribute it to any other agency, human or divine. On the eve of their liberation he predicts "new things", and this for the sake of "His name" and because He knows how prone His people are to misinterpret the course of events.

There is divergent criticism of this passage. Some have denied that Second Isaiah wrote it, while others believe there is a nucleus of original oracle here, with a secondary commentary woven in. J. Muilenburg holds to "the essential unity of the poem",<sup>2</sup> and suggests that the clue to unity, and interpretation as well, is in an analysis of style.

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1. J. Skinner: Isaiah (Chapters 40-66); p. 79.
  2. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 553.



Verses 1 and 2 set forth the unique relationship between Israel and Yahweh through such significant phrases as "house of Jacob", and "name of Israel", (see 44:5 for both Jacob and Israel). "Lord of Hosts", ( יהוה צבאות ) was discussed at 44:6.

Verses 3 to 6a teach the lesson of "former things" - that Yahweh has proved His power to foretell, by being active in history to fulfill past predictions, (see also 41:22-23; 42:9; 43:9, 18; 46:9-10; also 44:6-8; 45:21). The reason, mentioned above, was so that Israel could not ascribe them to her idols (see 41:5-7).

In verses 6b to 8, Yahweh announces new things: Babylon's conquest, Israel's deliverance, the overthrow of heathenism and the manifestation of Yahweh's glory, (verse 14).

"They are created now, and not from the beginning;  
And before this day thou heardest them not,  
lest thou shouldest say, 'Behold, I knew them?'" 1

"Created", underlined above, employs ( ברא - see 40:26). "To create is to call into being by a word; and the idea here seems to be that the prophetic word which announces, is at the same time the creative fiat of Jehovah."<sup>2</sup>

The emphasis in "For my Name's sake", (verse 9), and the repetition of the similar idea in verse 11, (J. Muilenburg says the word "name" has fallen out<sup>3</sup>), suggests "the undeserved forbearance of God, who acts

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1. J.A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 31, (Isaiah 48:7).
  2. J. Skinner: Isaiah (Chapters 40-66); p. 82.
  3. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 558.



solely for the sake of His honor".<sup>1</sup> The thought here is similar to that in Ezekiel 36:22 - that if Yahweh had allowed his people to be obliterated, His "name" would have suffered. Instead of cutting Israel off, He has "refined" her. "Chosen" in verse 11 is parallel to "refined", and should be understood as "tested", following the Dead Sea Isaiah scroll.<sup>2</sup>

Verses 12 to 16. Verse 12 begins in a characteristic prophetic manner, similar to verse 1, by a summons to listen:

"Hearken unto me, O Jacob,  
and Israel, my called!  
I am He; I am the first,  
I also am the last.

Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth,  
and my right hand hath spread out the heavens;  
when I call unto them,  
they are ready to do my will."<sup>3</sup>

A central word here is "call", (from verb קָרָא , meaning call, proclaim or read).<sup>4</sup> Israel is called, and the heavens and the earth also respond to God's call. "Thus history and creation are united, the covenant people and the cosmos. God alone is God, the first and the last, the beginning and the end, and the universe is created by him. The elements of invective have disappeared, for they have all been grasped and interpreted in the light of the glory and purpose of God."<sup>5</sup> The expressions underlined above emphasize the oneness, uniqueness and the

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1. J. A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 32, (Isaiah 48:7).
  2. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 557.
  3. J. A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 32, (Isaiah 48:12, 13).
  4. Brown, Driver and Briggs; p. 894.
  5. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 558.





eternity of God, (see discussion at 41:4). In all these verses, creation is viewed as a continuing Divine activity, not a once-and-for-all event.

The substance of the "new things", (referred to in verse 6), is that Yahweh has called Cyrus, (as one whom He loves), to execute His pleasure on the Chaldeans:

"All ye assemble yourselves, and hear!  
Which among them hath declared these things?  
The Lord hath loved him; he will do his pleasure on Babylon.  
and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans." 1

The summons here is to the people of Israel, not to the nations. as in 41:22; 43:9; 45:20. The argument from history is again presented: "Which among them (that is, their gods) hath declared these things," (verse 14b).

God's action to bring His purpose to pass in the present crisis is outlined vividly by the verbs of verse 15, "spoken," "called," "brought," and "prosper". These refer to Cyrus' work, from a religious viewpoint.

Verse 16 is a climax of the four verses being considered, but unfortunately there are textual difficulties. The genuineness of the line "And now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me" is doubted.<sup>2</sup> We must, however, note the concept in this verse, that God clearly communicates His purpose to man, (He has not spoken in secret). that He has been present, preparing and directing its fulfillment. (see also 45:19). If, perchance, the last line of this verse is genuine, we have here

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1. Isaiah 48:14.

2. Interpreter's Bible; Vol. 5; p. 561.



another possible reference to Second Isaiah's initiation into prophecy, (see also 40:6).

Verses 17 to 19: Although J. Skinner assigns this section to an interpolator,<sup>1</sup> the views of J. Muilenburg, C. North, and R. Levy will be accepted, that this is not the case. These three verses contain a regretful complaint that Israel has not kept to the path of God. If they had done so they would never be in their present difficulties. But now their chance has come, and the section after this, (verses 20 to 21), will summon Israel to flee from Babylonia. Verse 17 contains several important concepts of God:

"Thus says the Lord, thy Redeemer,  
the Holy One of Israel:  
I am the Lord thy God,  
which teacheth thee to profit,  
which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go." 2

"Redeemer" (בֹּרֵא) and "Holy One of Israel" (קדוש ישראל) are used together and discussed at 41:14. In verse 17 they are followed by a solemn word of revelation in which Yahweh makes himself known as Israel's teacher and leader. The verb (למד) used here, means to teach someone something,<sup>3</sup> while (הלך) means cause to tread or march, lead, from which comes the noun (דרך), way, road, manner of moral action and character.<sup>4</sup> "Yahweh's leading of Israel is a major element of her history

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1. J. Skinner: Isaiah: (Chapter 40-66); p. 85.

2. Isaiah 48:17.

3. Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 540.

4. Brown, Driver and Briggs, Pp. 202, 203.





and piety, (Exod. 13:18, 21; 15:13; Deut. 4:27; 29:5; Pss. 5:8; 23:2; 27:11; 43:3; 139:10, 24; cf. also Isa. 40:11; 55:12; 63:13).<sup>1</sup>

Psalm 81:13 to 16 provides a good parallel for verses 18 and 19. The Divine mood, revealed in verse 18, is compassion and yearning for Israel, who had not obeyed Yahweh's commands. But although judgment was deserved, verses 9 to 11 indicated that divine grace was the controlling factor.

Verses 20 and 21. Deliverance is so near and certain that Second Isaiah cries:

"Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans!  
With a voice of singing declare ye, tell this,  
utter it even to the end of the earth, say ye,  
"The Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob!  
and they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts;  
he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them,  
he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out." 2

The excitement is indicated by short sentences. But even more important than liberation, is the fact that Yahweh has "redeemed his servant Jacob", who is to publish the glad tidings to all the world. (see verse 17 above, and 41:14 for "redeemer",  $\text{בִּרְכָּא}$ ).

Verse 21 above, is a recollection from the first exodus,<sup>3</sup> which in itself is a sure promise for the second, (see 41:18 and 43:19).

Verse 22. This verse is from 57:21 where it is properly related to its context. Its use here is considered "either a gloss or an editorial insertion intended to mark the close of a division of the prophecy."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 561.
  2. Isaiah 48:20, 21.
  3. Exodus 17:6; Numbers 20:11.
  4. J. Skinner: Isaiah (Chapters 40-66); p. 87.



Summary.

<u>The Concept.</u>	<u>Pertinent Verses</u>
Lord of Hosts	2
All-knowing	3, 5, 6, 14
Active in history to accomplish his purpose	3, 11, 16
Creator	7, 13
Honourable	9, 11
Choosing	11
Calling	12, 15
Eternal, Absolute	12
Loving	14
Clearly communicating	16
Redeemer	17, 20
Holy One	17
Personal	17
Teacher	17
Leader	17



# 11. The Servant's Mission - Chapter 49, Verses 1 to 13

The beginning of chapter 49 marks a great divide in Second Isaiah's work, as well as an important development in his teaching. S.R. Driver comments:

"The controversial tone, the repeated comparisons between Jehovah and the idols, with the arguments founded upon them, disappear: the prophet feels that, as regards these points, he has made his position sufficiently secure. For the same reason, allusions to Cyrus and his conquest of Babylon cease also: that, likewise, is now taken for granted. He exhorts the people to fit themselves morally to take part in the return, and to share the blessings which will accompany it, or which it will inaugurate; he contemplates more exclusively the future in store for Israel, if it will respond to Jehovah's call; and he adds fresh features to the portrait of Jehovah's ideal Servant." 1

As these ideas are developed, Second Isaiah devotes himself increasingly to two subjects - the Servant of the Lord, and Israel's glorious future.

The first six verses of chapter 49 constitute the "Second Servant Song", (the first was 42:1-4), and are discussed at greater length in chapter five of this thesis.

Verse 7. Here is Yahweh's consolation for discouraged Israel. The tone is tender, as it was in chapter 40. A wonderful reversal of fortune is in store for Israel, which will amaze Gentile kings and princes. Here we see anticipated Israel's rise from degradation to glory among the nations, which is the subject of a later section, Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12.

"Thus saith the Lord,  
the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One,  
to him who is heartily despised, abhorred by the nations,

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1. S.R. Driver: Isaiah, His Life and Times; pp. 233, 234.





to a servant of rulers:

"Kings shall see and arise,  
princes also shall prostrate themselves,  
because of the Lord that is faithful,  
and the Holy One of Israel, and he has chosen thee." 1

The portions underlined are J. Bewer's suggested changes to the King James Version.

"Redeemer" (בֹּרֵא) and "Holy One" (שֶׁוֹדֵק) occur together here, as in 41:14, where they were discussed. At the conclusion of this verse, "Lord" and "Holy One" are repeated from the opening, with the additional conceptions "who is faithful", (אֱמִינִי), and "who has chosen you", (אֲבָרְכְּךָ). "Throughout Israel's history Yahweh reveals himself as the faithful, covenant-keeping God on whom Israel may rely (cf. Deut. 7:9)".<sup>2</sup>

Verses 8 to 12. Spoken to Israel, these verses picture the exiles, redeemed as from an Egyptian-style captivity, traversing in safety the long journey to their homeland. The "acceptable time", (which J. Bewer suggests should be "time of favour or grace"<sup>3</sup>), has been already realized in the King James version, but in the Dead Sea Isaiah Scroll, the tense is changed from perfect to imperfect (future), suggesting that the "day of salvation", bringing Yahweh's help, intervention and redemption, is still to come.

In verses 9 to 11, the returning exiles are pictured as sheep with Yahweh as their shepherd and leader, (see 40:10 and 11).

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1. J.A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 34, (Isaiah 49:7).
  2. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 570.
  3. J.A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 34.



There are echoes, also, of the transformation of nature in 41:17-20; 43:19-20, and of the passages 42:1-4, 5-17, where the Servant and his work were introduced.

Verse 13: This hymn of thanksgiving resembles 44:23; 52:9; 55:12-13, and is translated by R. Levy as follows:

"Sing, ye heavens, and be joyful, earth,  
let the mountains break forth into singing,  
For the Lord hath consoled his people  
and doth compassionate his afflicted ones." 1

"Consoled" above employs the verb (□□] meaning "to comfort, console."<sup>2</sup>

Other uses of this verb are at 40:1; 51:3, 12, 19; 52:9. "Compassionate"

employs the verb (□□∩) meaning "have compassion (God's acceptance of

His people)."<sup>3</sup> This verb is used again at 49:15; 54:8, 10; 55:7, and

the noun at 54:7. J. Muilenburg briefly summarizes the note of this

hymn: "Creation rejoices in God's redemptive work".<sup>4</sup>

#### Summary.

<u>The Concept</u>	<u>Pertinent Verses</u>
Calling	1
Former (fashioner)	5
Universal	6
Redeemer	7
Holy One	7
Faithful	7
Choosing	7
Hearing	8
Active to help, preserve	8
Covenanting	8

1. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 228, (Isaiah 49:13).

2. Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 637.

3. Ibid., p. 933.

4. Interpreter's Bible: Vo. 5; p. 573.





Summary (continued).The ConceptPertinent Verses

Shepherd  
Leader, guide  
Comforter  
Compassionate

9, 10  
10  
13  
13



## 12. The Consolation of Zion - Chapter 49:14 to 50:3

The tone of the prophecy changes "from forte to piano, and from triumph to pathos" says C.C. Torrey<sup>1</sup> as we move into this section. From the exuberant hymn in verse 13, Zion gives expression to her dejection in verse 14. But with beautiful and tender poetry, Second Isaiah announces the return of Jerusalem's population and the rebuilding of her waste places.

Chapter 49: Verses 14 to 21. Although she now thinks of herself as rejected and barren (verse 14), Zion is assured of the unchanging love of her God, more constant and enduring than that of a mother for the child she has borne and suckled (verse 15):

"Can a woman forget her sucking child,  
that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?  
Yea, they may forget,  
yet will I not forget thee." 2

"Have compassion" uses (חַנּוּן), as in verse 13. "The supreme source of Israel's life is the love of God for her, and it is the source of all her consolation (cf. 43:4; 44:21; 46:3-4)."<sup>3</sup> In a still more anthropomorphic figure, verse 16 portrays Yahweh as a lover with his beloved's name on the palms of his hands.<sup>4</sup>

Such love will soon be manifested in Zion's restoration to the joy of motherhood, (verses 17 and 18). She will be amazed at the number of her children, who were born and grew up in exile, when it seemed

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1. C.C. Torrey: The Second Isaiah: p. 386.
  2. Isaiah 49:15.
  3. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5 ; p. 574.
  4. C.R. North: Isaiah 40-55; p. 111.



that God had forsaken her, (verses 19 to 21). So numerous will they be, that the land will strain to contain them. This closing picture is in sharp contrast to the despondency expressed in verse 14.

Verses 22, 23. On a signal from Yahweh, (a communicating God), the nations will bring home Zion's scattered children. Their kings and queens will consider it an honour to foster the newly-formed community.

Verses 24 to 26. Second Isaiah sets forth the mighty God able to cope with any resistance: "I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save your children", (from verse 25). Although the first part of verse 26 shows a flare of Oriental fury, the latter part contains a great theocentric conclusion:

"And all flesh shall know  
that I, the Lord, am thy Saviour  
and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

Saviour (from  $\text{יָשׁוּעַ}$ , see 43:3) and Redeemer ( $\text{פֹּדֶם}$ , see 41:14) are already familiar concepts. "Mighty One of Jacob" ( $\text{יְהוָה יִשְׂרָאֵל}$ ) appears only once in Second Isaiah - in this verse.

Chapter 50, Verses 1 to 3. In doubting whether or not God would restore them, the exiles went so far as to think that the marriage begun at Sinai between God and Israel had been ended. To this the prophet says definitely not. Neither has God sold His children to any creditors. Rather their iniquities sold them into captivity. But God can "redeem", ( $\text{פֹּדֶם}$ , see 42:14), and can "deliver" ( $\text{יִצְּחַק}$ , meaning "to deliver from enemies and troubles")<sup>1</sup>. R.W. Rogers adds: "He has

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1. Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 664.





the power, and as proof of that, appeal is made to the exhibition of divine power during the exodus from Egypt, when God dried up the sea, stopped Jordan's flow, and covered the heavens with blackness (cf. Ex. 10:21)".<sup>1</sup>

Summary.

<u>The Concept</u>	<u>Pertinent Verses</u>
Love (compassion)	49:15
Remembering	49:15
Communicating	49:22
Active to accomplish	
His purpose	49:22-23
Personal	49:24
Saviour	49:24, 26
Redeemer	49:26; 50:2
Mighty One	49:26
Deliverer	50:2

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1. Abingdon Commentary, p. 660.



### 13. Discipline of the Servant - Chapter 50, Verses 4 to 11

In verses 4 to 9 of this section, the Servant of the Lord is again introduced, in what is known as the third "Servant Song". Reference should be made to chapter five of this thesis, where the songs and their problems are discussed at greater length.

In brief, the Servant here describes the close and continuous communion or communication with God through which he has learned the ministry of comfort by the Divine word, and his own complete surrender to God's guidance (verses 4 and 5). In the discharge of his commission, he accepts persecution and abuse (verse 6), knowing that God will help him (verses 7 to 9) by defending his cause as judge and advocate (see 41:1), and vindicating him soon (see also 52:13 and 53:11).

Verses 10 and 11 form an appendix to the preceding Servant passage, drawing lessons for the encouragement of believers (verse 10), and the warning of unbelievers, (verse 11). The genuineness of these verses as part of Second Isaiah's writing is still an unsettled question.<sup>1</sup>

#### Summary.

##### The Concept

##### Pertinent Verses

Communicating  
Helping  
Vindicator  
Judge and Advocate

4, 5  
7, 9  
8  
8

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 578.





#### 14. Certain Salvation Coming - Chapter 51, Verses 1 to 16

Second Isaiah picks up the theme with which he was dealing before the third "Servant Song", namely "the comforting of Zion by the repeated assurance that the time of her deliverance is at hand."<sup>1</sup> Emotion, imagination, and intensity of faith match the grandeur and scope of the theme. In its development, appeal is made to history, creation, and eschatology.

Verses 1 to 3. The first two verses are historical reflection, the third is eschatological promise. Both are designed to encourage and comfort Zion, (see also 40:1, 27; 41:10).

Second Isaiah asks the discouraged exiles to recall their progenitors Abraham and Sarah. God's call (אֶרֶץ, see 48:12) multiplied one lone man into a mighty nation. Comfort and prosperity are again promised to Zion. "Comfort" (from אָנַח) was discussed at 49:13 and is used again in verse 12 of this chapter.

"Ye that follow after righteousness", employs (יִשְׁע) in the sense of "deliverance, vindication or salvation".<sup>2</sup>

Verses 4 to 6. A glorious future is in store for those who endure, for an exhibition of God's righteousness is near. Although heaven and earth may disappear, God's world-wide salvation is eternal.

"Hearken unto me, my people,  
and give ear unto me, O my nation!  
For a law shall proceed from me,  
and my judgment as a light of the peoples.

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5, p. 589.

2. Ibid., p. 590.



My righteousness is near;  
 my salvation is gone forth,  
 and mine arms shall judge the people;  
 the isles shall wait upon me,  
 and on mine arm shall they trust." 1

"Law" ( לך ) and "judgment" ( שפוט ) are to lighten the Gentiles.

These words are employed in the same special sense as in 42:1-4 (the first "Servant Song").

"Righteousness" ( צדק ) and "Salvation" (from יושע) have very nearly the sense of "victory" and "deliverance" as in 45:8 and 46:13.

The sequence of eschatological events: צדק, שפוט, לך, יושע, culminates in the assertion of divine sovereignty: "Mine arms shall judge (rule or govern) the peoples",<sup>2</sup> (similar to 40:10). J. Muilenburg comments:

"The outgoing divine activity of God in the world, with all its momentous effects, has as its counterpart the active waiting of the peoples for his coming (vs. 5d) and their hoping for the redemption that his victorious arm ushers in (vs. 5e; cf. 42:4)." 3

"The isles shall wait for me" recalls 42:4 of the first "Servant Song", though here it is Yahweh, not the servant for whom the nations shall wait.

In verse 6, Second Isaiah again calls us to consider God's creation, (as in 40:26):

"Lift up your eyes to the heavens,  
 and look upon the earth beneath;  
 for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke,

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1. J.A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 38, (Isaiah 51:4).
  2. Ibid., p. 38, (Isaiah 51:5).
  3. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 593.





and the earth shall wax old like a garment,  
 and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner;  
 but my salvation shall be forever,  
and my righteousness shall not be abolished." 1

J. Bewer considers the underlined phrases above to be a conviction of the highest prophetic insight: "In and above the perishing world there is an imperishable reality: the eternal salvation of the Lord".<sup>2</sup>

Verses 7 and 8. These verses are clearly dependent on the preceding section in form and content. The exiles not only pursue righteousness (p73, as in verse 1), they have an inner knowledge of righteousness (p73, verse 7), that is, they establish a relationship to God's righteous ordinances. The characteristic "Fear ye not", indicates that this is very definitely a word of comfort.

Verse 8 repeats and builds upon the closing phrases of verse 6 (discussed earlier). There, nature was transitory, here it is the oppressing power which shall pass away, while the righteousness and salvation of God will be everlasting.

Verses 9 to 11. This is the first of three similar passages in which Second Isaiah adds a fervent invocation, "To God's Conquering Arm", (see 40:10; 52:10; 53:1) to the divine assurance of imminent salvation, which we have just been considering. The other passages are 51:17-23; 52:1-6, and all begin with the words "Awake, Awake".

The imagery of these verses is mythological, resting on the conception of an ancient pre-creation conflict between Yahweh and the monster

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1. J. A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 38, (Isaiah 51:6).  
 2. Ibid.





called Rahab and the dragon. The Exodus reference in verse 10 suggests the influence of a Babylonian creation myth centring upon the idea of redemption. C. North comments: "We might put it that for the Hebrews creation is redemption, and redemption is creation. They extolled Yahweh as Redeemer-Creator, with the main emphasis upon his redeeming acts in history."<sup>1</sup>

Most scholars agree that verse 11, which closely resembles Isaiah 35:10, is an editor's insertion.<sup>2</sup>

Verses 12 to 16. This passage appears to be a sequel to the section just considered, containing Yahweh's comforting and encouraging reply:

"I, even I, am he that comforteth you."<sup>3</sup>

"Comfort" (נַחֵם) was mentioned at verse 3 of this chapter.

"The Lord thy maker" (יְהוָה יוֹצֵר - see 43:1) stresses a major theme of Second Isaiah,<sup>4</sup> "that the Creator of Israel is the Creator of the universe, and that the two great works of God are indissolubly related ... In view of these supreme realities, historical and cosmic, Israel has no grounds for her constant despair and anxiety."<sup>5</sup>

The text of the latter part of verse 13 and verse 14 is obscure.

Verse 15 is again a picture of God's might, parallel to verses 9 and 10, by His power over the sea. "The Lord of Hosts" (יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת)

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1. C.R. North: Isaiah 40-55; p. 121.
  2. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 246.
  3. Isaiah 51:12a.
  4. Isaiah 40:22; 43:1; 44:24; 45:12.
  5. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 599.



was discussed at 44:6.

Verse 16 is highly important for two reasons:

- (a) It bears upon the idea of the "Servant of the Lord." Language used elsewhere of the servant is here applied to Israel, strengthening the theory that the servant is somehow a personification of Israel.
- (b) The conception of a new moral universe about to be created, and which was partly anticipated in both verses 6 and 9, is here seen to be the ultimate goal of God's dealing with Israel, whose religious mission culminates in a universal and everlasting salvation.<sup>1</sup>

"The final words set the seal on Israel's new covenant existence within this new world: You are my people."<sup>2</sup>

#### Summary.

<u>The Concept</u>	<u>Pertinent Verses</u>
Calling	2
Comforter	3, 7, 12
Judge	4
Universal	4, 6
Righteous	5, 7, 8
Saviour	5, 6, 8
Strengthening	7
Creator	9
Redeemer	11
Maker	13
Personal	13, 15, 16
Lord of Hosts	15
Communicating	16

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- 1. J. Skinner: Isaiah (Chapters 40-66); p. 112.
  - 2. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 601.





15. God Reigns - Chapter 51:17 to 52:12

In the prologue of Second Isaiah (40:1 to 11) we read:

"Behold, the Lord God will come as a mighty one,  
And his arm shall rule for him", (from verse 10).

In 52:7 we hear the good tidings:

"Thy God Reigneth!"

The exalted theme first announced in the heavenly council of the Prologue is here brought to full expression. Just as Yahweh delivered his people in the dark hours of Egyptian bondage, so now He takes from their hands the cup of ruin, ushering in a new age - a new Exodus.

J. Muilenburg describes this poem as "the crown of the prophet's message",<sup>1</sup> because of its strategic location, literary style and form, and its literary relationships<sup>2</sup> such as:

- (a) The message of comfort is continued from the preceding section, (compare 51:3, 13 with 51:19; 52:9).
- (b) The fury of the oppressor (51:13) is reflected in the cup of trembling (51:17, 22).
- (c) The imminence of deliverance (51:5, 6, 8), here becomes reality (52:7, 9). God has become King (see 44:6), and redeemed (see 41:14) Jerusalem.
- (d) The "Arm of Yahweh", an eschatological symbol (51:5, 9; 53:1), is perfectly interpreted in the event (52:10).

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 602.  
2. Ibid.



- (e) The appeal "Awake, Awake" of 51:9, has its counterpart in 51:1.
- (f) The personal relation of Yahweh and His people is in the foreground in both sections: 51:13, 15, 16 and 51:22; 52:6, 7, 9, 10.
- (g) Judgment and redemption are major motifs throughout both sections, being near in 51:4, 5, and realized in 51:22; 52:9.

Verses 17 to 20. Second Isaiah, returning to the thought with which he began in 40:2, announces that Jerusalem's period of degradation is over. The city is pictured as a woman lying senseless, drunken with the "cup of the Lord's fury", her sons unable to help her.

Verses 21 to 23. The prophet here portrays a major feature of his eschatology, "the reversal of fortunes of those who suffer and those who cause the suffering."<sup>1</sup> Verse 22 contains news of top importance, signalled by "Therefore", "hear this", "Thus saith thy Lord", "Behold":

"Thus saith thy Lord, the Lord, and the God  
that pleadeth the cause of his people:  
Behold I take out of thine hand  
the bowl of staggering,  
and drained it of my fury;  
thou shalt no more drink it again." 2

Comments J. Muilenburg: "The Lord enters into judgment in behalf of his own people against their enemies (cf. 41:1-42:4; 43:8-13; 44:6-8, 21-23; 45:20-25; 48:14-16; 50:8-9)".<sup>3</sup>

Chapter 52, Verses 1 and 2. The figure of 51:17 is resumed, and

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 605.  
2. J. A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 40, (Isaiah 51:22).  
3. Op. Cit., 1 above, p. 606.



Second Isaiah begins his hymn of redemption, a song of Zion, who is called to lay aside her soiled garments and the emblems of her slavery and put on her "beautiful garments", her strength in Yahweh.

Verses 3 to 6. Because of style and structural discontinuity, the views of Muilenburg, North, and Skinner will be adopted, that these verses were not likely part of the original writing, and hence will be omitted from this discussion, (Note that they are prose).

Verses 7 and 8. In the following three strophes (7-8, 9-10, 11-12), Second Isaiah describes the return of Yahweh to Zion. He feels that it is his prophetic function and responsibility to proclaim this eschatological event, (see the Prologue, 40:1-11). Contemplation of the end stirs memories of the Exodus, which are woven into the closing lines of verse 12.

In verse 7, the prophet concentrates on the swiftly approaching messenger until he comes within earshot upon the nearest height of land and cries, "Thy God reigneth!"

In verse 8, the cry is taken up by the watchmen on the dilapidated walls; "The Lord returns to Zion."

Verses 9 and 10. Second Isaiah calls forth praise, thankfulness and joy, in "eschatological singing ... an authentic expression of Israel's piety (see 44:23; 49:13; 55:12)."<sup>1</sup>

"Break forth into joy,  
sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem;  
for the Lord hath comforted his people,  
he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol.5; p. 612.









"The Dead Sea Scroll adds, "The God of the whole earth he is called."<sup>1</sup>

Summary.

The Concept

Pertinent Verses

Personal	51:20, 22; 52:7, 9, 10
Advocate	51:22
King	52:7
Comforter	52:9
Redeemer	52:9
Strong	52:10
Universal	52:10
Saviour	52:10
Leader	52:12
Protector	52:12

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 613.





## 16. Yahweh's Suffering Servant - Chapter 52:13 to 53:12

This is the fourth, last, greatest, and most difficult of the "Servant Songs". The most-debated question arising from this passage is the identity of the speakers (first person plural) in 53:1 to 10. Interpretation is made more difficult by suspected textual corruption.<sup>1</sup> The verse-by-verse study of this song, its problems and contributions is presented in chapter five.

This powerful, dramatic and triumphant poem suits its context very well. The major motif of the great reversal in 49:1-52:12 and 52:13-53:12 is the same, and is continued in chapter 54. Comments J. Muilenburg:

"The stress on the arm of Yahweh, the purpose of Yahweh, the parallelism of nations and kings, the words "bare" and "carried", the extraordinary emphasis on affliction (50:5-6; 51:17-23; 54:11; cf 52:2-6), and many other similar phenomena argue strongly for Second Isaiah's authorship of the poem and for its present position in the collection." 2

### Summary.

<u>The Concept</u>	<u>Pertinent Verses</u>
Active to bring His purpose to pass	52:13; 53:10
Revealed strength	53:1
Active to Redeem	53:5,6
Active to Justify	53:11

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1. C.R. North: Isaiah 40-55; p. 130.
  2. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 615.



17. Future Restoration of Israel and Renewal of Covenant -  
Chapter 54, Verses 1 to 17

This chapter continues the theme of consolation similar to 44:1-5; 49:14-21; 50:1; 51:1-3, and is closely related in composition and thought to 51:17-52:13. "There the theme of the coming of the king in his glory to usher in the time of salvation occupies the center of the stage; here it is the inauguration of the new covenant."<sup>1</sup>

The relationship between this chapter and the preceding song is a more difficult problem, but Skinner and others suppose a real connection between the two in the mind of Second Isaiah. He says:

"The two chapters (meaning 52:13-53:12 and chapter 54) deal with the same subject from two distinct standpoints. Whatever view be held as to the Servant's personality, there is no doubt that his exaltation implies the restoration of Israel, and that his work is the indispensable condition of the restoration being accomplished. Thus while chapter 53 describes the inward process of conversion by which the nation is made righteous, chapter 54 describes the outward deliverance which is the result; and the impression is probably correct that the glowing hopes here uttered are sustained in the last resort by the contemplation of the Servant's mission as described in chapter 53." 2

By means of this poem of tender encouragement, Second Isaiah has fulfilled the initial command to "speak to the heart of Jerusalem", as mentioned in 40:2. Against the dark background of the exile's sadness, this cry of joy breaks like sunrise:

"Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear!  
 Break forth into singing, and cry aloud,  
 thou that didst not travail with child!  
 For "more are the children of the desolate,"  
 saith the Lord, "than the children of the married wife." 3

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 632.

2. J. Skinner: Isaiah (Chapters 40-66); p. 135.

3. Isaiah 54:1.





Verses 1 to 3. Zion lies solitary, desolate and unloved, having lost her husband and become barren with the destruction of the city. Now in the near future, she is to have more children than in the days of her married life - from the Sinai covenant to the separation at Jerusalem's fall in 586 B.C. She is asked to make more tent space available for them, because they will spread on all sides, peopling the deserted cities and the Gentiles' territory.

Verses 4 and 5. The central idea here is Yahweh's personal and intimate relation to Israel - illustrated by the figure of marriage, He as the husband, and she as the wife. Their temporary separation is to be succeeded by a union resting on a new and unchangeable covenant. When this joyous reunion has been consummated, she will remember neither the "shame of her youth" (including the Egyptian exile), nor the "reproach of her widowhood" (the recent Babylonia exile when Yahweh removed Himself from Zion).

Once more Zion is commanded to "Fear not" (see 41:10, 13f; 43:1, 5; 44:2), and the reason is set forth in verse 5:

"For thy Maker is thine husband,  
the Lord of hosts is his name;  
and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel,  
the God of the whole earth is he called." 1

The wealth of Second Isaiah's Concept of God is here impressively presented. He is:

(a) "The Lord of Hosts" (יהוה צבאות, see 44:6), with all the forces of the universe at his beck.

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1. J.A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 44, (Isaiah 54:5).





- (b) "The Holy One" ( קדוש, see 41:14), immeasurably above and "other" than man, and yet at the same time "the Holy One of Israel" ( קדוש ישראל), protector and guardian of her destiny.
- (c) Israel's "Maker" (from יושע, see 43:1).
- (d) Israel's "husband" ( בעל), suggesting literally "he who marries thee".<sup>1</sup>

Both of the names in (c) and (d) are used in the "plural of majesty" in the Hebrew text,<sup>2</sup> just as is "thy God" in verse 6. He who has entered into this closest and tenderest of relations is none other than He who made thee".<sup>3</sup>

- (e) Israel's "Redeemer" ( גאל, see 41:14), responsible for her deliverance and liberation.
- (f) God of the whole earth ( יהוה כל-ארץ), universally omnipotent to achieve His purposes.

This verse actually sums up the prophet's theology, which H.S. Coffin states this way: "God is Lord of the universe high above and different from man, graciously entering into fellowship with his chosen people for the redemption of the entire human race."<sup>4</sup>

Verses 6 to 8. Yahweh has called Zion back to Him in mercy, for early associations are strong, and Zion's grief during her separation

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1. J. Skinner: Isaiah (Chapters 40-66); p. 137.  
 2. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 271.  
 3. Op. Cit., 1 above.  
 4. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 635.



from Yahweh was great. The restored relationship will be stronger for what has transpired. J. Muilenburg comments on the intimate, personal relationship revealed in these verses: "The mutuality of the relationship is finely expressed: Israel is grieved in spirit for her Lord (verse 6), and God calls her by his irresistible love".<sup>1</sup> P. de Boer translates verses 7 and 8 as follows:

"For a brief moment I forsook you,  
but with great compassion I will gather you.  
In overflowing wrath I hid my face from you a brief moment,  
but with lasting devotion I will have compassion on you,  
Says your redeemer Yahweh." 2

God abandoned Israel in the "wrath" (עֶצֶב, meaning wrath of God<sup>3</sup>), of His judgment, but it was only for a moment. But with lasting "devotion" (דִּבְנָה), He has "compassion" (חַנּוּן) upon her.

(דִּבְנָה), meaning everlasting kindness of God,<sup>4</sup> is described by C. North as "one of the most beautiful words in the language, and expresses the emotional tie which binds the parties to a covenant to one another".<sup>5</sup>

(חַנּוּן) in verses 7, 8, 10, by P. de Boer as "compassion", and in the King James Version, as "mercy", was discussed at 49:13.

"Redeemer" (פֹּדֶם) was discussed earlier at 41:14.

Verses 9 and 10. Second Isaiah here employs the early traditions to make clear the permanence of the new revelation. As God

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 636.
  2. P. de Boer: Second Isaiah's Message; p. 37 (Isaiah 54:7,8).
  3. Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 893.
  4. Ibid., p. 339.
  5. C.R. North: Isaiah 40-55; p. 143.





swore to Noah, and fulfilled His promise, so now He will permanently turn His wrath from His people. This section closes with the assurance that Yahweh's everlasting "kindness" (𐤓𐤁𐤍), and His covenant of peace, which is its guarantee, are more enduring than even the mountains and hills. J. Bewer makes slight changes to the King James Version (underlined below) giving verse 10 as follows:

"Though the mountains should depart,  
and the hills be removed,  
 yet my kindness ( 𐤓𐤁𐤍 ) shall not depart from thee,  
 neither shall my covenant of peace be removed,"  
 saith the Lord that hath mercy (𐤍𐤑𐤒) on thee." 1

"Covenant" (𐤍𐤑𐤒) as used here, means "a divine constitution or ordinance, with signs or pledges",<sup>2</sup> specifically referring to God's covenant with Moses, Genesis 9:9-17, while "peace" ( 𐤍𐤕𐤔 ) has the additional meaning of "completeness, soundness and welfare."<sup>3</sup>

Verses 11 to 17. This section presents a further message of comfort, with a promise of material prosperity. Jerusalem will be rebuilt in magnificent fashion (verses 11 and 12); her citizens "taught of the Lord", shall enjoy peace, undisturbed by the thought of oppression (verses 13 and 14); her enemies shall fall, and any weapon raised against her will fail.

The covenant language of verses 8 and 10 is continued in this section, (see especially verse 13). The motif "fear not" is introduced in verse 14, and recalls verse 4. Verse 11 is similar to verse 1 in

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1. J. A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 45 (Isaiah 54:10).
  2. Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 136.
  3. Ibid., p. 1022.



stressing the reversal of Israel's fortunes, through Yahweh's activity.

"Taught of the Lord" (לְמוֹדֵי יְהוָה - verse 13), means literally disciples of Yahweh, "initiated in the true knowledge of God, and obedient to His will."<sup>1</sup>

Jerusalem will be secure because her foundations are laid "in righteousness" (צְדָקָה - verse 14), that is, "in conformity to the righteous will of her Lord. The word carries ethical content, but includes more particularly in Second Isaiah the meaning of salvation and vindication. It means both the character of Jerusalem's citizens, who are taught by the Lord, and God's redemptive activity in her transformed life".<sup>2</sup>

Yahweh as Divine Creator (using בָּרָא, see 40:26), declares His omnipotence in verses 16 and 17, as in verse 5. He creates both the forger of weapons, and the ravager who uses them. Thus all their activity is under His control.

This section closes fittingly, with "righteousness" (צְדָקָה), used as it was in verse 14, given to Yahweh's servants, as their heritage.

"Servants of the Lord" (עַבְדֵי יְהוָה), in the plural, is thought by J. Skinner, to provide a point of contact between chapters 53 and 54. "The ideal represented by "the" Servant of Jehovah is now

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1. J. Skinner: Isaiah (Chapters 40-66); p. 139.
  2. Interpreter's Bible; Vol. 5; p. 640.



reproduced in each individual member of the new Israel; they are all of the spiritual seed which was promised to him, and the salvation they enjoy is the fruit of the travail of his soul (53: 10, 11)."<sup>1</sup>

Summary.

<u>The Concept</u>	<u>Pertinent Verses</u>
Strengthening	4, 14
Personal	4, 5, 6-8, 10
Maker	5
Lover	8, 10
Lord of Hosts	5
Redeemer	5, 8
Holy One	5
Omnipotent (universal)	5
Compassionate (merciful)	7, 10
Wrathful	8
Covenanting	10
Teacher	13
Righteous	14, 17
Creator	16

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1. J. Skinner: Isaiah (Chapters 40-66); p. 141.





## 18. Accept God's Salvation - Chapter 55

In this solemn, beautiful and earnest chapter, Second Isaiah brings his prophecy to a triumphant close. In the manner of a skilled artist, the prophet deftly draws together the major emphasis of the preceding poems, especially the prologue (40:1-11).

The purpose of writing is Israel's consolation, just as it was at the beginning (40:1). J. Muilenburg elaborates:

"The time of forgiveness has arrived (cf 40:2), the exiles are to return to Zion (cf. 40:3-5, 9-11), and nature will participate in the event in an outburst of song (cf 40:4). The word of God will effect its purpose in the world (cf 40:8). The everlasting covenant once promised to David will be established, and the new exodus, reminiscent of the event **with** which Israel's history began, will take place." 1

The message concerning Zion's prosperity is continued, together with a gracious invitation to all men to share in the blessings of the new Covenant, and an assurance that Yahweh's word does not remain unfilled.

Verses 1 and 2. Yahweh freely offers spiritual food. R. Levy translates these gracious verses as follows:

"Ho, all that thirst  
come ye to the waters,  
even he that hath no money;  
come ye, buy, and eat;  
yea come, buy, without money  
and without a price, wine and milk.

Wherefore do ye spend money for what is not bread  
and your earnings for what is not satisfaction?  
Hearken, yea hearken, unto me and eat the good  
and let your soul delight itself in fatness."

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 642.



Second Isaiah uses the life-giving figures of food and drink as symbols of the new covenant gifts, blessings conferred by the covenant relationships and membership in the kingdom of God, "that which is good", and fully satisfying.

The universal extent of the prophet's invitation is seen from the first verse, "Ho, all that thirst." No one is excluded.

Verses 3 to 5. The offer of verses 1 and 2 is summed up in the promise of an everlasting covenant (𐤏𐤍𐤁, see 42:6, 49:8 and 54:10, also Jeremiah 32:40; 31:31-33). The only condition is our responsiveness to a communicating, loving God:

"Incline your ear and come to me,  
hear that you may live.  
For I will make with you an everlasting covenant,  
my reliable evidences of devotion to David." 1

The word which P. de Boer translates as devotion, is (𐤕𐤁𐤍), discussed at 54:8, and reflecting Yahweh's covenant love to David (in II Samuel 7:8-16), now to be transferred to Israel.<sup>2</sup>

In verses 1 to 3a, the language can be read as that of Second Isaiah only. But verses 3b to 5 with Yahweh speaking are so closely tied to the first portion, that Yahweh can be found speaking through both sections. "The whole," says North, "is a striking example of the way in which a prophet could not only speak on behalf of God but even as God, (a similar passage is 5:1-7). The word of the prophet is the word of God, his indignation God's indignation, his sorrow God's sorrow.

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1. P. de Boer: Second-Isaiah's Message; p. 38, (Isaiah 55:3).
  2. C.R. North: Isaiah 40-55; p. 148.





It is pre-eminently in this that we have in the Old Testament anticipations of the Incarnation, of the Word become flesh."<sup>1</sup>

Verse 5 gives Israel's mission, which will be to gather the nations of the world to her, through her witness to the "Holy One of Israel", (see 41:14), because He had personally "glorified" her,  $\gamma \times \gamma$ , to "beautify, glorify".<sup>2</sup>

Verses 6 to 9. Salvation awaits, (verses 6 and 7). The call to repentance is reinforced by reference to Yahweh's Holy thoughts and ways, (verses 8 and 9).

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found;  
call ye upon him while he is near.  
Let the wicked forsake his way,  
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;  
and let him return unto the Lord, and he will  
have mercy upon him,  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."<sup>3</sup>

God requires only that man change his life and seek his God, who will, without hesitation or question, have mercy and abundantly pardon.

"Have mercy", ( $\square \square \gamma$ ) was discussed at 49:13.

"Pardon" employs ( $\square \gamma \gamma$ ) meaning "to forgive, pardon, always of God."<sup>4</sup>

The ground for such confidence is Yahweh's Holiness and Omnipotence, the concepts underlying verses 8 and 9. (These terms were discussed at 40:25 and 54:5 respectively).

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1. C.R. North: Isaiah 40-55; p. 148.
  2. Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 802.
  3. Isaiah 55:6,7.
  4. Op. Cit, **2** above, p. 699.



"For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways", saith the Lord,  
"for as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways,  
and my thoughts than your thoughts." 1

Man finds it difficult to understand Divine mercy and forgiveness, because of God's greater thoughts and ways. "His range of vision is universal and includes all men. His understanding of the human heart is deeper than human understanding. His government and sovereignty are different from human ways. It is precisely because of this that the invitation to "seek", "call", "return", have such force, for God is "permitting himself to be found" and is drawing near."<sup>2</sup>

Verses 10 and 11. Here the activity and mission of the word of God is discussed, in parable form. The spiritually apathetic have to be convinced that God's seemingly impossible purpose for mankind will come to pass. The "word", (וַיִּדְבֹּר, see 45:23), which communicates His mind has, like rain and snow, inherent powers of fruitfulness - a duty to perform. This thought is well expressed in R. Levy's translation of verse 11:

"So shall be my word, which, going forth from my mouth  
Shall not return unto me void,  
except it hath accomplished that which I desire,  
and made to prosper that for which I sent it." 3

The purpose of God is a great concern of Second Isaiah, (44:28, 46:10; 48:14; 53:10). As J. Muilenburg says: "God's purpose is in his word (וַיִּדְבֹּר) and will be realized in the event with which his word is in-

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1. Isaiah 55:8, 9.
  2. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; pp. 648, 649.
  3. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 280, (Isaiah 55:11).



dissolubly related." <sup>1</sup>

Verses 12 and 13. In these concluding verses, Second Isaiah returns to thoughts of liberation from exile under Yahweh's leadership, which is the occasion, and a major theme throughout his work. "This is the event which evokes the prophet's deepest feeling and most lyrical expression (40:3-5; 41:17-20; 43:19-31; 49:9c-13; 51:9-10; 52:11-12). He conceives it as a new exodus and portrays it in all the glowing imagery of nature. The years of affliction and oppression are over; the return home will begin a new life. The exiles "shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace". So the note of comfort with which the poems begin sounds again." <sup>2</sup>

"For ye shall go out with joy,  
and be led forth with peace;  
the mountains and the hills  
shall break forth before you into singing,  
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree,  
and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree;  
and it shall be to the Lord for a name,  
for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." <sup>3</sup>

Second Isaiah has here employed the theme of the Second Exodus through the transformed wilderness, (41:18-20; 43:19-20; 49:9-10). More important still, this transformation will remain "to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off", (verse 13). Name (□ W) here means "memorial, monument". <sup>4</sup>

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 650.

2. Ibid.

3. Isaiah 55:12, 13.

4. Brown, Driver and Briggs; p. 1028.





With the realization and fulfillment of God's effective word at hand and the response of the people to the Lord's event taking shape, the prophecy of Second Isaiah is brought to its fitting conclusion.

Summary.

<u>The Concept</u>	<u>Pertinent Verses</u>
Communicating	3, 11
Covenanting	3
Personal	5
Holy One	5
Accessible	6
Compassionate (merciful)	7
Forgiver	7
Holy and Omnipotent	8, 9
Active to accomplish His purpose	11
Leader, sustainer	12



CHAPTER V.

THE SERVANT SONGS





## CHAPTER V

## THE SERVANT SONGS

Introduction

'Behold my servant, whom I uphold;  
mine elect in whom my soul delighteth;  
I have put my spirit upon him;  
he shall cause right to go forth to the nations.'<sup>1</sup>

These words introduce us to a mysterious yet powerful figure dwelt upon in four portions of Second Isaiah which scholarship has chosen to call "Servant Songs." They are 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13 to 53:12.<sup>2</sup>

Reading these passages-

"is as though we were passing along the picture-gallery of a great house, the creation and shrine of a noble lineage, and amongst all the portraits of distinguished ancestors, bearing the names of well-known artists, there was one that had no label, one of tragic mien as well as of perplexing anonymity, yet one which stood out from all the rest by its inherent right, and compelled our testimony, 'Surely, this was the greatest of them all.'" <sup>3</sup>

Such was the Servant, upheld by God, of whom we read in the four Servant Songs. Although identification has proven most difficult and controversial through the ages, a study of these passages is very essential, because here is an outcropping of the bed-rock of our incomparable God's true nature.

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1. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p.144 (Isaiah 42:1).
  2. A minority of scholars include in these songs - 42:5-9; 49:7-9; 50:10-11. An increasing number claim that Isaiah 61:1-4 is also an authentic Servant Song, and there are several supplemental poems - 41:8;10; 43:8-13; 44:1-8,21-22,24-28; 45:1-8.
  3. H. Wheeler Robinson: The Cross in the Old Testament; p.65.



These four Songs differ significantly from Second Isaiah's other Servant references. They refer to the Servant as an individual, use different rhythm and sometimes a distinctive vocabulary. In addition, the Servant of the Songs is supremely and knowingly committed to his task, whereas elsewhere in Second Isaiah, Israel is the Servant who has been faithless and blind to his mission. In commitment the Servant resembles Cyrus, while historical Israel closely resembles the Suffering Servant.

Although such identifying features cast some doubts on Second Isaiah's authorship of the Songs, modern scholars feel that there is a sequence of thought throughout chapters 40 to 55 which is not of secondary origin, but derives from the prophet himself. A representative spokesman, G.W. Anderson says:

"It cannot be denied that there is a frequent transition from one brief literary unit or type to another. But these units are not disconnected. They are skilfully woven together into larger wholes; and the patterns of repetition and contrast are not limited to these brief units, but extend over larger passages." 1

#### Identification of the Servant

According to N. K. Gottwald, theories to be considered fall into three classes: First, those which explain the Servant as a Group, representing either historical Israel, or a minority within it; second, those which regard the Servant as an Individual - possibly an historical person, or even the Prophet himself; third, those which regard the

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1. G.W. Anderson: A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament; p. 115.



Servant as both Individual and Group, being a fusion of elements drawn from great leaders of Israel's past, plus that way of thinking in totalities by which Israel can be conceived of as a single organism with individual consciousness. 1

An impressive piece of evidence for the collective view is 49:3 of the second Song: "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Other passages outside the Servant Songs make the same identification,<sup>2</sup> suggesting that Second Isaiah identified "Servant" with "Israel" throughout chapters 40 to 55.

This theory meets with two objections. First, there is a heightening individualization through the four Songs which climaxes in the gripping account of one who suffers and dies for others (52:13-53:12). It is difficult not to think that here the Prophet had in mind an individual:

"He is despised and rejected of men,  
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;  
and we hid as it were our faces from him;  
he was despised, and we esteemed him not". 3

Secondly, in 49:5-6, the Servant seems distinguished from Israel by having a mission to Israel:

"And now, said the Lord,  
who formed me from the womb for a servant to him,  
for the bringing back of Jacob unto him-  
And if Israel is gathered to him,  
I shall be honoured in the eyes of the Lord;  
And my God shall be my strength -" 4

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1. N.K. Gottwald: A Light to the Nations; pp. 418-426.
  2. Isaiah: 41:8; 42:19; 43:10; 44:1-2,21; 45:4; 48:20
  3. Isaiah: 53:3
  4. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah: p. 222 (Isaiah 49:5)





He is called to bring back Jacob unto Him, and to gather Israel to Him. But it has been suggested that "the servant here may signify the true Israel within Israel, the faithful core which has not succumbed to pagan ways of life and worship. The members of this group have a mission to both their own nations and other peoples. They are to embody the spirit of sacrificial suffering for others by which Israel as a whole may in turn bring healing to the nations."<sup>1</sup> Although Israel, historically, fell far short of showing this spirit, Second Isaiah could still visualize her, chastened by centuries of suffering and inspired by her most spiritually sensitive citizens, as chosen by Yahweh to fulfill his purposes.

Second Isaiah's picture of the Servant harmonizes well with the kind of community he conceives Israel to be capable of becoming. In two ways, therefore, we can think of the Servant of the Lord as a Servant-community, a kind of corporate personality; he is the Israel that already exists in the inner core of dedicated souls, the so-called "pillars of faith", and he is the larger Israel which God calls the whole nations to be.

#### Character and Mission of the Servant

Although the Servant's identity has not been clearly established, his character and mission are not left in doubt, and can best be grasped by a synthesis of collective and individual features (the third class

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1. S. Paul Schilling: Isaiah Speaks; p.113.



of theories, mentioned earlier). From the opening Song, which contains no hint of the Servant's martyrdom, through to the fourth, which pictures his suffering and death, there is dramatic movement and unfolding purpose, well summarized by N.K. Gottwald:

"Yahweh's love and power are to be made manifest to the nations through Israel, and through some person or persons within Israel who participates in the love of Yahweh to the extent of self-obliteration. Supreme power is in love rather than coercion." 1

The Songs will now be individually examined.

The Servant Commissioned. In the first song (42:1-4), Yahweh introduces the Servant, whom He has appointed. The words of Divine approval, "in whom my soul delighteth," are used also by the heavenly voice at Jesus' baptism and transfiguration.<sup>2</sup> Having been endowed with God's power, the Servant now has an important service to render to the nations. It is emphasized by the triple repetition of the Hebrew word for judgment ( שֹׁפֵט ), which is set in parallel with ( מִשְׁפָּט ). Julius Beyer comments that "judgment" here comprises "all the ordinances of the Lord regulating conduct toward God and men and is therefore best translated, truth or the true religion (of the Lord)." 3

The speaker in this passage is Yahweh. The audience is not specified. The Servant is introduced as already present, but his mission will be fulfilled in the future. The main features follow:

The ideas of chapter 41, verses 8 to 10, which mention Israel's

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1. N.K. Gottwald: A Light to the Nations; pp. 425,426.
  2. Mark 1:11; Matt 17:5.
  3. J. Beyer: The Book of Isaiah, Vol. 2, p. 17.





election and fortifying as a Servant, form a springboard for this passage. After the presentation of the Servant, and his equipping with the Divine Spirit (verse 1), the Song presents the Servant's Commission, namely to be the organ of the true religion (  $\overline{\text{ל}} \overline{\text{ל}} \overline{\text{ל}}$  ) to the world.

His mission will proceed quietly (verse 2), and without physical force (verse 3), but issue in complete success, crowning an effort of unflinching constancy, (verse 4). J. Skinner observes:

"If the Servant of the Lord here described is Israel, he is obviously not Israel in its actual condition of bondage and inefficiency. He is Israel according to its idea- the Divine ideal after and towards which Jehovah is fashioning the people." 1

The personification used easily leads to the impression that an individual is meant - "one representative Israelite who would sum up in his own person as Servant all that Israel was meant to be." 2

The Servant Called. In the second Song (49:1-6), the Servant himself speaks to the nations, first describing his call, (preordained "from the womb"), and the equipment with which to present it. A sharp sword and a polished arrow are figures used to describe the penetrating powerful divine message which will spring from the Servant's mouth at the appointed time. Until then, Yahweh protects the Servant like an arrow in his quiver.

"Thou art my servant, O. Israel, in whom I will be glorified," from 40:3 seems to be proof positive that Israel is the Servant. But R. Levy points out that "one Hebrew manuscript omits Israel, and it is

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1. J. Skinner: Isaiah 40-55; p. 26.  
 2. G.A.F. Knight: A Christian Theology of the Old Testament; p. 293.





followed by three modern scholars who hold that the Servant is an individual; namely a saint or martyr, or perhaps the prophet himself." 1

A backward glance reveals that Israel has not glorified God, and the Servant experiences failure. Nevertheless he has to labour on, resolutely trusting in God's justice, willing to leave "the increase", or results, with God, in whose presence he finds his strength and reward. James Muilenburg suggests that the sense of the Song is improved if the last two lines of verse five are placed immediately after verse four, whose thought they complete.<sup>2</sup>

It has already been mentioned that verse five, in which the Servant is called "to bring Jacob back", seems to stress a Servant not identical with the nation. But using the presupposition that "the one who restores Israel in chapters 40 to 55, is always the Lord",<sup>3</sup> Julius Bewer suggests that we have here indirect speech. With his proposed translation in brackets, verse five appears as follows:

"And now, saith the Lord,  
that formed me from the womb to be his servant,  
(that He would bring Jacob back to Him)  
and that Israel would be gathered to Him):  
yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord  
And my God shall be my strength." 4

In verse six, the Servant is reminded that it is not enough for his own people to be redeemed. In addition, the restoration of Israel is to be a means to the salvation of the world. Reuben Levy gives this

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1. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 221.
  2. Interpreter's Bible: Vol 5; pp. 564-568.
  3. J. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 33.
  4. Ibid. (Isaiah 49:5).



translation:

"And he said:  
Too slight is it for thy being a servant to me,  
to raise up the tribes of Jacob  
and to bring back the guarded ones of Israel;  
Therefore I give thee for a light to the nations  
to be my salvation unto the end of the earth." 1

This verse has been called "the grandest statement of universalism since Amos".<sup>2</sup> This song envisions Yahweh's message carried to the nations, who will worship Him on the same terms as Israel. Israel and the Servant exist for the world!

The Servant Upheld by God. In the third song (50:4-9), the Servant speaks of himself and his work. He describes the close, intimate, and continuous communication with God through which he has learned how to "sustain with a word"<sup>3</sup> the weary, having first been strengthened himself, by complete surrender to the voice that daily guides him (verses 4,5). Being teachable, the Servant is able to teach. Next is described his acceptance of the persecution which he had to encounter in the discharge of his commission (verse 6); and finally, in verses 7 to 9, he describes his unwavering confidence in Yahweh's help, the victory of his righteous cause and the inevitable disintegration of his opposition. P. de Boer translates this verse as follows:

"Mark my lord Yahweh, he helps me;

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1. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 233, (Isaiah 49:6).
  2. N.K. Gottwald: A Light to the Nations; p. 415.
  3. J. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 37.





who will declare me guilty?  
 Mark those all, they will fall asunder like a garment,  
 the moth will eat them up." 1

The Suffering and Victory of the Servant. This fourth song (52:13-53:12) is the last, the greatest, as well as the most difficult to interpret. It provided a basis for Jesus' conception of His own mission, as well as for the explanation of His death, which became a central facet of the Christian evangel.

The keynote of this song, which has been described as "the most influential poem in any literature"<sup>2</sup> is the "redemptive power of unmerited suffering borne for others".<sup>3</sup> For the first time in the Old Testament, suffering appears as a positive good - suffering in service, even unto death. This powerful and dramatic message has brought comfort to many by giving meaning to their sorrow. We see in this song a graphic picture of the Servant, (at whatever oscillatory representation between the group and its individual may have been in the author's mind), being treated with contempt, and yet bearing silently the outrages put upon him, aware of his global mission as God's Man. "The greatness of his conduct lies in the fact that his sufferings are not the result of his own sins. It is his revilers that sinned and who deserved punishment, but he bears their woes in order that they may go free; that his

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1. P. de Boer: Second-Isaiah's Message; p. 29, (Isaiah 50:9).
  2. Interpreter's Bible: Vol 5; p. 614.
  3. S. Paul Schilling: Isaiah Speaks; p. 116.





sufferings may atone for them. The true meaning of his conduct will in the end be recognized, and the servant will find his proper place in the world."<sup>1</sup> This exaltation is achieved "not through divine intervention that spares him, but through patient endurance of wrong unto death."<sup>2</sup>

The whole of this song divides into five paragraphs or strophes of three verses each. The first and last present the words of Yahweh, while the intervening three voice the confession of the nations. Relating the history of Israel to that of the nations, this song contrasts the humiliation and exaltation, the suffering and victory of the Servant. The overall emphasis is triumph through suffering, by the power and grace of God.

Chapter 52, verses 13 to 15. In these three verses, the brilliant triumph of the Servant is predicted. Although known to many in his misfortunes as an object of aversion and contempt, he will suddenly be revealed in his true dignity. The unexpected transformation will shock the world into astonishment and reverence. These verses form a prelude to Chapter 53, and launch the theme, which is the sharp contrast between the degradation which has been the Servant's lot, and the glorious prognostication:

"Behold, my servant shall prosper,  
he shall be exalted and lifted up,  
and he shall be very high." 3

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1. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 257.
  2. N.K. Gottwald: A Light to the Nations; p. 416.
  3. P. de Boer: Second-Isaiah's Message; p. 34, (Isaiah 42:13).



Chapter 53, verses 1 to 9. The prophet now proceeds to describe the Servant's career, and the impression which he made on his contemporaries. This is prefaced by verse 1 which serves as a confession of the universal unbelief which had led to the Servant's misunderstanding:

"Who could have believed the report we heard?  
and the arm of the Lord, to whom was it revealed?" 1

Ideas as to the nature of the report vary greatly. It may have been the preaching of the great prophets, the preceding Servant Songs, or Second Isaiah's previous message. An important tie to the central thoughts of preceding passages is through "the arm of the Lord" (יְדֵי יְהוָה) (for example, 40:10-11; 48:14; 51:5; 52:10 and particularly the impassioned cry of 51:9). These references enforce the idea of God's power and control over the affairs of men to accomplish his purposes. Note: the Hebrew reads "the arm of Yahweh upon (or 'over') whom has it been revealed." "The Dead Sea Scrolls has ( יָדוֹ בְּכֻלָּם ), "to whom". 2

Repulsive and revolting in appearance (verse 3), the Servant was "despised and rejected". This loneliness or separation from support and company of his family and friends would be a deadly affliction to an Oriental. The worst part of all this is that men did not realize who he was or what he was doing.

Verses 4 to 6 reveal the moral judgement which the people were

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1. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah, p. 260, (Isaiah 53:1).  
2. Interpreter's Bible; Vol. 5, p. 619.





led to form regarding him. The Servant's unparalleled sufferings had seemed to mark him out as a special object of Yahweh's anger (verse 4), just as Job's calamities were thought by his friends to be the evidence of great, though secret, sins.<sup>1</sup> But the reversal of this judgment and the insight thereby gained of the true nature of the Servant's mission is the chief note of this section. At last the people see that although he suffered greatly, he was innocent, and from here they advanced to the conclusion that he suffered on their behalf, bearing the penalty due to the sin of the nations. "This change of attitude towards the Servant marks the beginning of repentance in the people; the consciousness of their own guilt takes possession of their minds when they read God's judgment upon it in the chastisement borne by their substitute."<sup>2</sup> P. de Boer's translation of these verses makes their impact shockingly clear:

"Surely, HE bore OUR sicknesses, and carried OUR pains.  
Yet WE esteemed HIM stricken, smitten by God and humiliated.

But HE was struck because of OUR rebellions,  
shattered because of OUR iniquities.  
The chastisement was upon HIM so that WE are prosperous  
and through HIS stripes WE are healed.

All of US went astray, like sheep, each turned to HIS own way,  
but Yahweh struck HIM with the punishment of US all." 3

In verses 7 to 9, the narrative of the Servant's sufferings is brought to its conclusion: After enduring violence and injustice at

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1. Job 4:8.

2. J. Skinner: Isaiah 40-55, p. 126.

3. P. de Boer: Second-Isaiah's Message, p. 35, (Isaiah 53:4-6).





the hands of men, his life was cut short and he was buried in a dishonoured grave. Throughout there is a contrast between what he bore and how he bore it - between US and HIM.

"He was hard driven, but he was submissive,  
and opened not his mouth." 1

The underlined clause, written in poetic style, is repeated again in the latter part of verse 7, and then echoed in verse 9 which stresses his innocence:

"And his grave was put with wicked ones,  
and with the rich at his death;  
Though he had done no violence  
and there was no deceit in his mouth." 2

Chapter 53, verses 10 to 12. These difficult verses describe, partly in the prophet's own words, and partly in those of Yahweh, the Divine purpose realized through the Servant's suffering.

In verses 10 and 11, the connection of ideas is not clear, and commentators suspect "considerable textual disorder."<sup>3</sup> The main idea, however, is that the Servant is to be the instrument in establishing the true religion, by removing the burden of guilt and bringing many to righteousness (verse 11). The reward of his sufferings will be a bright future with many spiritual offspring, and his own position will be like that of a mighty conqueror (verse 12).

If the Servant is a personification of Israel, the idea of resur-

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1. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah, p. 263, (Isaiah 53:7)
  2. Ibid: p. 265, (Isaiah 53:9).
  3. J. Skinner: Isaiah 40 to 55, p. 131.



rection which is implied at this point is merely a figure for national restoration from exile; but if he is an individual, then his resurrection must be accepted as fact, just as his death must be considered a fact. C. North suggests that: "The explanation may be that when the passage was written there was no clearly articulated doctrine of resurrection from the dead. The Prophet could therefore only express himself in general terms which led to mystification and consequent textual corruption. Another possibility is that the passage is reminiscent of the myth of the dying and rising God (Tammuz). In such mysteries the revivification of the god is assumed but never described."<sup>1</sup>

Working in the most probable emendations, R. Levy suggests the following translation of verse 11:

"He shall see the fruits of the travail of his soul,  
He shall be satisfied in spite of his misery;  
My servant makes the many righteous,  
While he is burdened with their iniquities." 2

The impassioned climax reached in these concluding verses is actually a self-revelation of God's saving nature, inextricably bound to God's saving purpose, entirely fulfilled through the whole career of the faithful Servant. The song ends as it began, with the promised exaltation of him who gives himself vicariously for the sake of others. The frame of Divine significance begun in 52:13-15 now completely surrounds and transforms the tragic Servant portrait. The "trumpets of

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1. C.R. North: Isaiah 40 to 55; p. 138.
  2. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 268, (Isaiah 53:11)





transfiguration"<sup>1</sup> which were heard in overture at the Song's beginning now sound in the concluding coda:

"Therefore I will make allotment for him among the strong,  
and with mighty ones he shall allot spoil;  
Because of this, that he poured forth his soul unto death,  
and was numbered with transgressors;  
Yet he bore the sin of many  
and interceded for the transgressors." 2

### The Songs as Prophecy

Two comments may be made as to the prophetic significance of the Servant Songs:

(a) The frequent use in Isaiah 53 of the "Hebrew prophetic perfect" tense of verbs, suggests that the word-image created by Second Isaiah, of the coming spiritual liberation by means of the Suffering Servant, will, in fact, one day become reality. It is bound to happen! The word has gone out, ( 727, see chapter 4, Isaiah 45:23), filled with energy and power to fulfill its function. Thus the Servant Songs constitute a revelation of God's active relationship to the world and His plan for its salvation.

(b) As Second Isaiah wrote (and perhaps spoke) of the Servant's tragedy and triumph in God's redemptive plan, he created, in miniature, what God in His might would perform on the large scale of History. This was prophetic symbolism (see chapter 3), as clearly as when Jeremiah broke the water pot (Jeremiah Chapter 19), foretelling God's actualiza-

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1. N.K. Gottwald: A Light to the Nations; p. 416.

2. R. Levy: Deutero-Isaiah; p. 268, (Isaiah 53:12).



tion in history of Jerusalem's destruction. Through the impulse of the Spirit, Second Isaiah was creating a bridge into the future, over which the "word" was one day bound to pass into reality, - "a fait accompli in the realm of God's creative and redemptive activity."<sup>1</sup>

### The Servant and Jesus Christ

The Servant Songs "bring home" to Israel her true place in God's agenda of history. She is called to accept and carry out her mission to bring redemption to all nations, even if in the form of a Suffering Servant.

The Songs were prophetic in character. Even though Israel did not heed the call, they found fulfillment almost six centuries later in the life, passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer - through whose sufferings men are reconciled to God. "Jesus fulfilled the prophecy by recognizing Himself, His purpose and method in the Servant figure".<sup>2</sup> The New Testament writers often make the same identification, finding Isaiah 53 (and the closely related passage 61:1-4), to be vital to the meaning of Jesus' suffering, death and victory. The following list shows typical New Testament passages with the relevant Servant passages indicated in brackets:<sup>3</sup>

Mathew 3:17	(42:1)
12:18-21	(42:1-4)
17:5	(42:1)

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1. G.A.F. Knight: A Christian Theology of the Old Testament; p. 293.
  2. N.K. Gottwald: A Light to the Nations; p. 426.
  3. S. Paul Schilling: Isaiah Speaks; p. 119.



Mark	9:12	(53)
	10:45	(53)
	14:24	(53:12)
Luke	4:18,19	(61:1,2)
	22:37	(53:12)

From the beginning of the Christian Church, the gospel or good-news has centred in the story of one who was "struck with the punishment of us all", and through whose "stripes we are healed." It was thus given to Second Isaiah to glimpse and foreshadow in his Servant Songs the deepest meaning of the Christian revelation. "He saw the upsetting truth that God has taken the despised things of this world in order to confound the mighty (1 Cor. 1:22-30). Here was the foundation for Christianity."<sup>1</sup>

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1. N.K. Gottwald: A Light to the Nations; p. 426.





CHAPTER VI.

THE RESULTS



## CHAPTER VI

## THE RESULTS

Introduction

Underlying the whole development of the idea of God in the Hebrew mind is this basic thought, says Dr. H. Wheeler Robinson:

"He (Yahweh) is conceived not as abstracted from human life but as revealed within it.... He is Yahweh, the God of Israel, known for what He is by what He does. He is the unseen partner in Israel's fortunes, afflicted in all their afflictions. Their interests are His, and His ought to be theirs." 1

Thus we see that to remove words or phrases from their place in Second Isaiah's writings, to tabulate and discuss them analytically is to hear the note and miss the melody, or to hear the instrument, but miss the impact of the full orchestra. This is true of course, because the written words, while imparting individual content of meaning are at the same time collectively providing a Concept of God intimately involved with a particular historical situation.

Consequently, the first part of "The Results" will be a summarization, in tabular form, of Concepts of God which have been isolated in each of the eighteen sections of "The Investigation" completed in chapter four. The recorded location of each Concept, by chapter, will give an idea of the frequency of occurrence.

The second part of "The Results" will be a discussion of the "Uniqueness (Transcendence) of God" and the "Nearness (Immanence) of

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1. H. Wheeler Robinson: Religious Ideas of the Old Testament; p. 51.





God" in Second Isaiah, including the major Concepts tabulated in part I, but with more explanation of terms, and frequent reference to the historical context.

An important advantage of the study of the Concepts in their textual locations (as was done throughout chapter four), is that the style and structure speak out their Concept of God just as rhythm and expression convey meaning from a musical composition. J. Muilenburg says: "In Second Isaiah more than elsewhere in the Old Testament the form and pattern of expression articulate the writer's thought, since he is a consummate master in the art of literary style and rhetoric."<sup>1</sup> It will not be possible to recapture in this chapter of results the ecstatic feelings or sublime expression which reveal Second Isaiah's prophetic consciousness and artistic talents, so these general points are mentioned in advance:

a) Second Isaiah wrote in poetic form. "He is so supreme a poet because the message he proclaimed demanded the poetic form; no other form could bear the burden of his impassioned spirit".<sup>2</sup>

b) The thought of Second Isaiah is intensely dramatic. "The collection of poems as a whole has all the elements for the making of a vast drama in which heaven and earth, past, present, and future, Israel, the nation, and Yahweh become major participants."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 398.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.



c) Considered individually, the poems do not fit well into a fixed dramatic structure, but possess their own dominant unities. "Their structure is Semitic, and they must be judged accordingly".<sup>1</sup>

It is outside the scope of this thesis to present a study of the form and style of this representative Semitic Literature, but a knowledge of the fact, and a consideration of the prophetic consciousness which was behind the pen (see chapter 3), help us to appreciate, understand, and present Second Isaiah's Concept of God.

#### I. Recapitulation of the Concept of God

<u>The Concept</u>	<u>Relevant Chapters</u>
Comforter	40,49,51,52
Personal	40,41,42,43,44,45,46,47,48,49,51,52,54,55
Glory	40,42,43,48
Universal	40,42,45,49,51,52,54
Communicating	40,42,43,45,48,49,50,51,55
Active Spirit	40,44
Strong, Mighty, Powerful	40,45,49,52,53,55
Eternal	40,41,43,44,45,46,48
Gentle	40,49
Creator, Maker, Former	40,41,42,43,44,46,48,49,51,54
Unlimited insight and understanding	40,41,42,43,44,45,46,48

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1. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 398.



I. Continued

<u>The Concept</u>	<u>Relevant Chapters</u>
Governor of World	40
Only God	40,41,42,43,44,46
Lord of Nature	40
Lord of History (and Nations)	40,41,42,46
Holy One	40, 41,43,45,47,48,49,54,55
Empowering, strengthening, helping upholding	40,41,42,43,44,49,50,51,54
Judge and Advocate	41,50,51
Electing, calling, choosing	41,42,43,44,45,48,49,51
Covenanting	42,49,54,55
Righteous	42,45,46,51,54
Redeemer	41,42,43,44,47,48,49,50,51, 52,53,54
Attentive, hearing	42,49
Active to care for personal needs	42,43
King	42,43,44,52
Life-giving (Spirit-imparting)	42
God of world purpose	40,42,43,44,46,48,49,52,53
Corrector of spiritual blindness	42
Hero, man of war	42
Capable of anger, wrath, and violence	42,54
Saviour (Deliverer)	43,45,46,49,50,51,52
Loving	43,48,49,54





I. Continued

<u>The Concept</u>	<u>Relevant Chapters</u>
Forgiver	43,44,55
Lord of Hosts	44,45,47,48,51,54
Rock	44
Accessible	45,55
Promising	45
Bearer	46
Teacher	48,54
Leader (Guide)	48,49,52
Faithful	49
Compassionate	49,54,55
Remembering	49
Vindicator (Justifier)	50,53
Protector	52

II. The Concept Discussed

Second Isaiah's message to a perplexed and downhearted people may be summarized in three words from the opening Prologue: "Behold your God!"<sup>1</sup> God the unique, the transcendent is also the near and the immanent to pardon and to deliver.

But dulled by years of resignation and torn by doubts, the exiles were not easily consoled, let alone stirred to enthusiasm. Did

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1. Isaiah 40:9.



their God really care? For people in such a mood, a mere prediction of release was not enough. Their basic religious convictions required overhauling. They needed to be taught the truth about the ultimate nature of the world in which they were having such a difficult time. Second Isaiah goes straight to the heart of the problem, and presents to them his Concept of God. In impassioned stanzas he writes of the sole existence and matchless power and wisdom of a transcendent God, but balances these passages with others throbbing with the calling, saving, redeeming love of an immanent, personal Lord.

#### The Uniqueness (Transcendence) of God

Second Isaiah is greatly interested in the "Holiness" of Yahweh. He uses some form of "Holy" to signify the essential nature of God in chapters 40,41,43,45,47,48,49,54 and 55. While we understand that this term points up the difference between God and man, (see 40:25), an examination of the usages does not leave us with an impression of awyness from man. There are personal expressions in all of the preceding chapters, and 42,44,46,51,52 as well, which clearly indicate a God who is at once apart from, and a part of the life of His people. It is only with Israel that Yahweh has entered into this special relationship of holiness; therefore she is the holy people,<sup>1</sup> and He is the Holy One of Israel ( a term which Second Isaiah employs eleven times, in chapters 41,43,47,48,49,54,55, each time in momentous pronouncements).

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1. Exodus 19:6.





In other locations,<sup>1</sup> the above expression is combined with other conceptions, as for example: "Your redeemer is the Holy One of Israel".<sup>2</sup> Such terms as "Redeemer", and "Saviour", will be discussed in the section - "Nearness (Immanence) of God."

It is Yahweh's Holiness and outgoing quality that evoke the frequent command: "Fear not".<sup>3</sup> Other words of similar significance are "empowering", "strengthening", "helping", "upholding", which occur in chapters 40,41,42,43,44,49,50,51,54.

Yahweh's Holiness, while uniquely His, shows itself in mighty acts of strength and power, (chapters 40,45,49,52,53,55). But here, as elsewhere, the prophet is pointing out the fundamental truth that Yahweh's Holiness demands responsibility on the part of those who are elected, called or chosen (terms used in chapters 41,42,43,44,45,48,49, 51) by Him. The word "covenanting" which describes this activity of God along with the reciprocal responsibility of faith and obedience, is used in chapters 42,49,54,55. "Glory" as an aspect of Yahweh's Holiness is mentioned in chapters 40,42,43,48.

God the Creator, Maker, Former. Second Isaiah continually illustrates the uniqueness of Yahweh by referring to His incomparable power as "Creator", (chapters 40,41,42,43,44,46,48,49,51,54). Although several verbs are used to express the creative activity (אָרַב , יָצַר , יָשַׁר),

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1. Isaiah 43:3,14; 47:4; 49:7; 54:5.

2. Isaiah 41:14.

3. Isaiah 41:10,13,14; 43:1,5; 51:7; 54:4,14; 44:2.



the information relayed is that it is God alone, who can perform the creative act and bring into being what did not previously exist. 1

But Yahweh is so much greater than His creations, that in performing these remarkable feats, He used but the cup of His hand to measure out the heavens, and a small balance to weigh the mountains and hills. 2

Second Isaiah occasionally used the creation theme to show God's cosmic power. The creation and ordering of the stars witnesses to "the greatness of his might",<sup>3</sup> as does His victory in the chaos-dragon myth in 51:9-10.

Creation also becomes the revelation of God's unlimited insight and understanding: "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?"<sup>4</sup> (Similar references occur in chapters 41,42,43,44,45,46,48).

God the Ruler of Nations and Men. Not only is Yahweh Maker and Master of the natural world, but He is also supreme Arbiter of the destinies of men and nations, even mighty Babylon and the powerful Chaldeans: "He shall perform His pleasure on the Chaldeans". 5

The movement of thought from "God the Creator" to "God the Ruler" is natural and logical to Second Isaiah. As S. Schilling phrases it:

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1. Isaiah 40:26; 44:24.
  2. Isaiah 40:12.
  3. Isaiah 40:26.
  4. Isaiah 40:13.
  5. Isaiah 48:14.

The information subject is that it is not clear what the subject is.

information on the subject is not clear what the subject is.

The subject is not clear what the subject is.

forming the subject is not clear what the subject is.

also on the subject is not clear what the subject is.

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George Lewis (1811-1881) was the first to use the word "subject" in its modern sense.

The subject is not clear what the subject is.

subject is not clear what the subject is.

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subject is not clear what the subject is.

subject is not clear what the subject is.

subject is not clear what the subject is.

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God the Father of Nations and Men. The subject is not clear what the subject is.

subject is not clear what the subject is.

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The subject is not clear what the subject is.

The subject is not clear what the subject is.

The subject is not clear what the subject is.

1	1811-1881
2	1811-1881
3	1811-1881
4	1811-1881
5	1811-1881



The physical world is not an end in itself; it is instrumental to the creation and salvation of people whom God cherishes."<sup>1</sup> Following this development, we note from our table that Yahweh is both "Life-giving and Spirit-imparting",<sup>2</sup> also that He formed the earth not in chaotic fashion but particularly to be inhabited.<sup>3</sup> "Creation has an end: the fulfillment of God's purposes for his creatures".<sup>4</sup> Often Second Isaiah appeals to God's creation as the background for history.<sup>5</sup> Even the most powerful of earth's rulers are as nothing, if at cross-purposes with Yahweh their true King, (see chapters 42,43,44,52), upon whom their very existence depends. Further references to Yahweh, Lord of Nations, History and World purpose may be found in chapters 40,41,42,43,44,46, 48,49,52,53.

God the Eternal. God is able to be Ruler because He is eternal and omnipotent. References to Yahweh's strength and power have already been noted, while Second Isaiah touches upon the eternal aspect of His Concept of God in chapters 40,41,43,44,45,46,48. Second Isaiah ties together the last three aspects, (namely that God is Eternal, Creator and Ruler of the world) in the following illustrative passage:

"Hast thou not known,  
hast thou not heard,  
that the everlasting God, the Lord,

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1. S. Paul Schilling: Isaiah Speaks; p. 88.
  2. Isaiah 42:5.
  3. Isaiah 42:5; 45:8,12,18.
  4. S. Paul Schilling: Isaiah Speaks; p. 88.
  5. Isaiah 40:15,17,23-24; 42:5; 43:1-7; 54:15,16.





the Creator of the ends of the earth,  
fainteth not, neither is weary?  
There is no searching of his understanding." 1

It is the conviction that God created the universe for a purpose and is present throughout to see that it is accomplished, which gives such potency to the Prophet's message, whenever it is heard. That purpose is specifically the salvation of His people for the sake of the rest of the world:

"Look unto me, and be ye saved  
All the ends of the earth;  
for I am God, and there is none else." 2

Such universal notes are sounded in chapters 40,42,45,49,54.

Only One God. Second Isaiah works out in clear terms the incomparable majesty of the eternal God as against the falsity of all belief in other gods. (See especially chapters 40,41,42,43,44,46). For example:

"I am God, and there is no other;  
I am God, and there is none like me. 3

Before me no god was formed,  
nor shall there be any after me.  
I, I am the Lord,  
and besides me there is no savior." 4

In proof of his denial that heathen gods exist, Second Isaiah often points out that only the Lord can foretell future events. (This is simi-

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1. Isaiah 40:28.
  2. Isaiah 45:22.
  3. Isaiah 46:9.
  4. Isaiah 43:10-11.



lar to the aspect of God's unlimited insight and understanding, mentioned earlier, with references).

Another expression which assists this concept is "Lord of Hosts", used in chapters 44,45,47,48,51,54. To this might be added the unusual use of "Rock" for God, in a discussion on this point:

"Is there a God beside me?

Yea, there is no God (Rock); I know not any." 1

#### The Nearness (Immanence) of God

Second Isaiah's concept of God contains equal parts of "Uniqueness" and "Nearness", which a study of the table will indicate. Whatever Holiness with its associated ideas meant to the prophet in question, it never caused a gap to appear between God, and Man whom He loved. "Loving" as an aspect of Yahweh is revealed in chapters 43,48,49,54, to be the reason for Yahweh's action as Righteous Redeemer and Saviour.

God is Redeemer. The central importance of this term in Second Isaiah's Concept of God is evidenced by its frequent usage, (chapters 41,42,43,44,47,48,49,50,51,52,53,54). From a study of the use of (  $\text{ב} \text{ר} \text{א}$  ) it seems that the prophet saw the reclamation of Yahweh's people proceeding on two levels:

(a) In the juristic sense, the physical aspects of the reclamation are presented. Yahweh as (  $\text{ב} \text{ר} \text{א}$  ) ransoms his people from bondage,<sup>2</sup> a counterpart of the release from Egypt; He avenges himself

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1. Isaiah 44:8.

2. Isaiah 43:3; 50:2.



upon those who have violated what belonged to Him.<sup>1</sup> This information is presented in an eschatological orientation, which includes the return home to Palestine,<sup>2</sup> the restoration of Jerusalem and the temple,<sup>3</sup> the restoration of the land,<sup>4</sup> and the conversion of the nations.<sup>5</sup>

(b) Secondly, the reclamation is inward and spiritual. Yahweh acts for the comforting of his people, (chapters 40,49,51,52). He forgives and wipes out their sins, (chapters 43,44,45), and does this for His own sake, as "Holy One of Israel", (to which reference has already been made). He is their vindicator, ( פִּתְּחָה , chapters 50,53), and at the same time their compassionate (chapters 49,54,55), faithful leader and teacher, (chapters 48,49,52,54).

To signal and effect such inward and outward changes, God has "communicated" with Man, an important aspect of Second Isaiah's Concept of God. The prophet is a witness to this in his calling, as well as his written references, which are many (chapters 40,42,43,45,48,49,50, 51,55). The following example uses "word" ( דְּבַר ) for Yahweh's pregnant communication:

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth;  
it shall not return unto me void,  
but it shall accomplish that which I please,  
and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." 6

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1. Isaiah 41:14; 43:14; 47:4; 49:7; 54:5-6.
  2. Isaiah 40:9-10; 43:20; 49:11; 51:11; 55:12-13.
  3. Isaiah 44:26; 45:13; 49:16-17; 51:3; 52:1,9; 54:11-12.
  4. Isaiah 44:26; 49:8,19.
  5. Isaiah 45:20-23; 49:6; 51:4-5.
  6. Isaiah 55:11.





Second Isaiah indicates the possibilities of two-way communication in chapters 42,45,49,55. Thus, God's accessibility forms part of his Concept:

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found;  
call ye upon him while he is near.  
Let the wicked forsake his way,  
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;  
and let him return unto the Lord, and he will  
have mercy ( חַסְדּוֹ , compassion) upon him,  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon ( סָלַח , forgive)."<sup>1</sup>

The interior relationship between God and His people is very noticeable in the intimate words of personal address, such as "our God", in the above passage. (Such personal expressions occur in almost all chapters and have been previously noted).

God is Saviour. Just as Holiness signifies the essential nature of Yahweh's transcendence, Second Isaiah places "Saviour" alongside "Redeemer" as an important aspect of his immanence. "Saviour" or "Liberator"(from יְשׁוּעָה ), is used in chapters 43,45,46,49. "Salvation" occurs in chapters 49,51,52 and "Deliverer", (from מְשַׁלֵּם ) in chapter 50.

In His saving power, Yahweh is unique (showing the fine blending of transcendence with immanence). There is no-one else who can save.<sup>2</sup> His salvation is eternal,<sup>3</sup> and shows itself not only in the victorious deliverance of His people, but to all the nations of the world:

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1. Isaiah 55:6,7.

2. Isaiah 43:11; 45:21; 46:2,4,7,13; 47:13,15.

3. Isaiah 45:17; 51:6,8.



"The Lord hath made bare his holy arm  
in the eyes of all the nations;  
and all the ends of the earth shall see  
the salvation of our God." 1

God is Righteous. ( פִּדְיוֹן , נִפְדְּיוֹן ). These words form an important part of Second Isaiah's vocabulary, occurring in chapters 42, 45, 46, 51, 54. N. Snaith traces the development in their usage. The eighth-century prophets stressed a meaning of "ethical rightness" for ( פִּדְיוֹן , נִפְדְּיוֹן ). He continues: "In Second-Isaiah we find a further stage of this development, for here the word means 'vindication' and even 'salvation' to a far greater extent than 'ethical rightness'! The meaning now is chiefly soterio-logical, and only to a slight extent ethical."<sup>2</sup> "Salvation" and "Righteousness" are presented side by side as Yahweh's "imperishable reality in and above a perishing world"<sup>3</sup> in the following verse:

"Lift up your eyes to the heavens,  
and look upon the earth beneath;  
for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke,  
and the earth shall wax old like a garment,  
and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner;  
but my salvation shall be forever,  
and my righteousness shall not be abolished." 4

The Relationship of the Servant Songs. Although these four passages were discussed together for sake of convenience (chapter 5), this investigator holds that they are an integral part of Second Isaiah's

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1. Isaiah 52:10.

2. N.H. Snaith: The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament; p.87.

3. J.A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 38.

4. Isaiah 51:6.



writings, and contribute significantly to His Concept of God. The argument is as follows:

(a) At the outset of "The Results", the core of the prophet's message was stated to be "Behold your God!" 1

(b) This revelation was received by Second Isaiah, through prophetic consciousness, and presented to his people, who saw, in their historical setting, some verification and reason for paying attention to his message. It rang true to all that they knew of history.

(c) The message was one of salvation on two levels, physical and spiritual.

(d) The agent of physical deliverance was Cyrus.

(e) The agent of spiritual deliverance was the Suffering Servant. As Cyrus represented the executor in history of Yahweh's redemptive world-purpose, the Servant appears as the means whereby Yahweh's people may be freed to unite again with Him spiritually.

(f) The Suffering Servant is therefore considered to be the personification of Yahweh's spiritual intention for His people.

(g) "His people", include all the children of all the nations, "even unto the end of the earth."<sup>2</sup>

(h) The "Servant Songs" provide a bridge between the "Uniqueness" and "Nearness" of God and enforce the fact that whether on the

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1. Isaiah 40:9.

2. Isaiah 49:6.





level of historical experience, or spiritual experience, Yahweh is active on a global scale to reveal, redeem, and restore, "that many transgressors may be brought once more to prosperity according to the good pleasures and will of God."<sup>1</sup>

### Concluding Statement

Underlying all that the author of Isaiah 40-55 has said on the subject "Behold your God", is his deep sure faith that Yahweh has revealed Himself. Thus Second Isaiah's Concept of God is presented in a "vocabulary of revelation"<sup>2</sup> so rich that it penetrates into every conceivable situation, and always with great variety and fluidity of thought. Rather than formulating a theological system, this author proclaimed a dynamic living message, with a Concept of God in its very fibre. Interwoven through the fabric of the Concept are the warp and woof of God's nearness and God's uniqueness.

"This was the great evangel of the Second Isaiah. Magnificently extolling the Creator, he proclaimed the infinitude of God. He reasoned with the nations about the sole and universal deity of the Lord, the God of Israel, expounding as its corollary the universality of the religion of the Lord. He interpreted the events of history as the work of God and showed that Israel's suffering was part of God's saving purpose for the world. And he held up to Israel the glorious ideal of service as God's missionary to the world, even at the cost of humiliation and

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1. N.H. Snaith: The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament; p. 92.

2. Interpreter's Bible: Vol. 5; p. 404.



suffering - glorious because its outcome would be glory. Thus he combined into a unity what nobody before him had done, the creation, the history and the salvation of the world as the purposeful work of the one, eternal and almighty, all wise, righteous and gracious God who had manifested Himself to Israel, and through Israel to the nations for the salvation of all."<sup>1</sup>

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1. J.A. Bewer: The Book of Isaiah; p. 8.



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